

THE SECRET OF HIS PURPOSE THE PLAN FOR THE FULLNESS OF THE TIMES
TO HEAD UP ALL THINGS IN THE KING,
EVERYTHING IN THE HEAVENS AND ON THE EARTH,
IN JESUS....

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Who Are You, Lord?

March 2019

This one question is probably the most important and profound one that anyone born of Adam's race could ask. In his quest to destroy the *Way*, Saul, a zealous Pharisee who prided himself in his knowledge of and obedience to the law of Moses (i.e., his own righteousness), encountered the Lord Jesus on the road to Damascus. As he was blinded by the glory of the ascended, glorified, and exalted Anointed Son of God, seated at the right hand of the throne of glory, the only words he could mutter were: "*Who are You, Lord?*" The response came immediately: "*I am Jesus.*" We can only imagine what went through Saul's mind at that moment.

We now know Saul as Paul, the apostle of the nations—given revelation that transcends time and space and, yet, is well within it, and answers to what the ancient prophets saw. According to Paul's own testimony, he was given the charge to complete the word (*logos*) of God (Colossians 1:25), and he did just that through his epistles, especially through his letters to the Ephesians and the Colossians. He shined the bright light of the Anointed One on all that the ancients saw only in types and shadows—his understanding and knowledge of Jesus as the ascended and glorified Christ brings Jesus the Messiah into sharp focus as no other author/writer of scripture does (my opinion). Keep in mind; unlike the twelve original apostles who personally knew Jesus in the flesh, Paul had no such experience. He knew Him in a grand way as the resurrected, ascended, glorified, exalted one seated at the right hand of God the Father, far above all rule, and all authority, and power, and dominion, and every name named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come ... with *the all* (all things) in subjection under His feet. He saw the full glory of the Lord.

Good News—Jesus

In Paul's epistles we discover a full revelation answering the question: "*Who are You, Lord?*" Before delving into Paul's answer, there are two introductory comments.

First, it appears that Paul never stopped asking this question; perhaps not always using these exact words, but we know that, as his life was nearing its end, he continued seeking to know the Lord. *That I may know Him!* (Philippians 3:10). Is it any wonder? Paul called Christ *the mystery of God, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge* (Colossians 2:2b-3). It is as if Christ is a treasure hidden in the earth or the universe, like gold, that has to be mined, if we are to come into the riches (abundance, wealth) of Christ, another one of Paul's expressions.

If we are honest with ourselves and with the Lord, we are all like Paul in his question: *Who are You, Lord?* Let's face it; there are times when we just do not understand God's ways in our lives, and we have more unanswered questions than answered ones. There are times when things don't make any sense and even seem to contradict God's very character and promises. We cry out: *Lord, what is going on?* Then, add to this the many seemingly contradictory teachings along with the many seemingly contradictory prophecies coming forth from the so-called *Christian*

world, and the strange events happening in the world that seem to be on the very edge of upsetting all that we thought we knew about this earth and the universe, and we come to Paul's cry: *Who are You, Lord?* If you haven't come to this point yet—it will come. It is as if it is a necessity to our growth in the Lord. This question goes along with a yearning deep within us that senses there is so much more to Jesus and we haven't arrived yet to a full understanding of Him. Some say we will be forever searching His riches. Along with this yearning, we might begin wondering about the many things we have been taught, including about salvation itself.

Dear beloved in Christ, we need to be like Paul, who, after declaring that he might know Him, also declared: *I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus* (Philippians 3:14). This is not a pressing on toward heaven, as if this is our ultimate destiny. It is about being fully like our Lord that comes with the redemption of our body through the *out-resurrection*—that is, immortality.

Second, and this will lead into the heart of what follows in this article; for the most part, the gospel or good news that is preached to the so-called *lost*, and then, in some quarters, repeated Sunday after Sunday to the so-called *saved*, falls way short of the good news of Jesus. So often, the message starts with a question like: *Where will you be if you died right now, in heaven or in hell?* Then, the preacher goes on attempting to save the lost out of hell and into heaven, trying to convince them that they are horrific people called *sinner*s that have offended a holy God and need to be saved so they can go to heaven when they die; otherwise, God is going to remain mad at them and send them to a pagan place called *hell*. They must ask Jesus to save them. Added to this, they might get into the ancient Jewish animal sacrificial system to highlight Jesus as the sacrificial Lamb of God that does away with all such sacrifices. But what if a person has no understanding of being a sinner (by the preacher's definition) or any understanding of or desire to know anything about the ancient sacrificial system? What does a so-called *gentile* (non-Jew) have to do with ancient rituals that are no longer practiced as part of any religious exercise anywhere in the world today? Often, messages are preached that don't even present the good news, and when the preacher has exhausted his notes or his PowerPoint presentation, he asks who in the crowd doesn't have Jesus. It's like: *Have you got Jesus?* Is it any wonder that people sit in pews or folding chairs week after week, hearing the same watered-down messages, often based more on psychology than spiritual truth, and they don't know Him in the sense that the apostle of the nations revealed in his epistles? Yes; the holy spirit can convict people, and often does, through such things to open their eyes to the truth. But, why not present the truth of Jesus in a way that truly lifts Him up and answers the question of who He is right from the start? Why leave people in the dark, blinded or ignorant of such a tremendous and glorious beginning or foundation upon which their lives can and will be built? We can only imagine that if Paul showed up on the scene today, he would not recognize what is being taught as if it were the truth of the good news.

Mind you; the motives of the many preachers and teachers in our day are not being questioned. Many of them are well-meaning in all they do as they have a heart to reach hearts for the Lord. However, the question is whether they are reaching out from the higher ground of Christ or a much lower ground that is correct as far as it goes, but falls short of the mark of Christ.

Here is my personal conclusion on the matter. I encourage you to take it to the Lord. Heaven, hell, and sin are not the beginning or starting point of the good news. Jesus alone is the starting point, and it is Him alone that must be presented to those who don't know Him and to those who do. If there is any message to repeat week after week (and the need for weekly sermons is seriously questioned), it must be centered on Jesus, the one who is preeminent and first and last in all things, that is, centered on *the all* of God. Anything less than this will only lead to a people being filled with a mental knowledge about Christian things, including a mental knowledge of a mostly moral and historic Jesus, as they are fed by professional preachers who have a mental understanding that they gleaned from their seminary studies, but not necessarily from real life experiences in union with the Lord. Wearing a collar or standing behind a pulpit or holding a seminary doctoral certificate is not proof the person lives in daily union with or even knows the Lord Jesus.

This leads to the heart of the matter. The good news or evangel or glad tidings must start with Jesus and who and what He is, not with sin and death. (Believe me, I know this goes against the evangelical grain.) It is proposed that sin and His sacrificial death and resurrection are not the starting points. This does not diminish their importance; it simply puts them in the proper perspective. The good news must start with the higher ground of God's Son. Jesus—the Anointed Jesus—is the first and the last of the good news. He is the good news, just as He is the way, the truth, the life, the faith, the love, the resurrection, and many more definitive (*the*) facts, including probably countless ones that we haven't, as of yet, even come to know or appreciate.

Now, to get on with the message. I debated with myself how to begin, but then I considered an account given in John 8—so this is where I'll start.

Whom are you making yourself to be?—I AM!

There is one more mighty answer to the question of who Jesus is that sums up His relationship to creation, humanity, and everything else that we are told about Him, and probably a lot we are not told. It starts with a conversation Jesus was having with the Jews who, it seems, were continually questioning Him throughout His earthly ministry.

Are you greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? and the prophets are dead: *who do you say that you are?* (John 8:53 BBE)

Jesus said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, Before Abraham came to be, I AM! (John 8:58 LITV)

People that listened to Jesus were often left asking themselves a variety of questions. Who is He? Who does He think He is? Where did He come from? By what authority does He say such things? What does He mean? Where is He going? And, the list goes on!

In John's account, Jesus proclaimed that the Jews who listened to Him and did not receive His word were of their father the devil, the father of lies—they were liars just like the devil. Interestingly, Jesus said the very same thing in Revelation 2:9 and 3:9. *They are Jews and are not, but lie!* Very strong indictment! We cannot be sure of the tone of voice used in John 8:53, but I

believe it was indignation: *Who are you making yourself out to be?* Or, perhaps, as one translation puts it: *Who do you think you are?*

To all the questions thrown at Him and all the controversy surrounding Him, Jesus' answer was and still is: **I AM!** This truly sums up His relationship to everything in God's creation—before it, and beyond it, and in it. I AM is infinite! I AM before all things; I AM in all things; I AM beyond all things. And, I AM sums up all things!

With this all-encompassing truth, we can now look at Jesus in relation to some specifics.

In Relationship to Creation

Let us begin by considering the Jesus *the old creation* Saul met on the road to Damascus and the revelation that came to *the new creation* Paul following this glorious, life-changing experience. In that flashing light of glory, he did not see death, sin, or fallen man; he saw glory, and it blinded him. Stated another way, Paul was blinded by life in glory, by the glorified heavenly man, the one who is beyond sin and death. Most profoundly, he was blinded by life in perfection, life as God intends it to be and is driving to accomplish in, through, by, and for the Son of His love. This is the genesis of Paul's gospel, and this is where we must begin in answering the question: *Who are You, Lord?*

He is the Son of God's love. First and foremost, Jesus is the Son of God the Father. The very essence of God is love, and Jesus is the object and manifestation of that love—thus, He is the Son of God's love. The *Mitchell New Testament* presents alternate renderings of the phrase *the Son of God's love*: *The Son which is His love*; *the Son who has the characteristics and qualities of His accepting love*; and *the Son whose origin is love* (Colossians 1:13). I like the last one.

He is the exact likeness or image of the invisible God. He is the radiance of God's glory. In Him dwells all the fullness of Deity in bodily form, meaning He is the visible manifestation of the invisible (unseen) God who is spirit. The fullness (nothing lacking) of God—all the essence and nature of God—dwells in the Son of God. There is nothing lacking in Him in relation to Deity. The Son exactly and perfectly mirrors His Father. (Colossians 1:15; 2:9)

He precedes all things as the firstborn of all creation. The Son was in God the Father before there was creation or the universe as we know it, meaning, as the Son of God, He precedes all things in the realm of physical matter, meaning nothing in the realm of the physical universe or creation existed prior to Him. But there is much more, for Paul was given the revelation that Jesus is the firstborn of all creation. As the first of creation, He has all the rights of inheritance and authority of the firstborn Son. There were no sons before Him. But there is even more, for the term *firstborn* implies that the Son was birthed from the Father. We can only speculate, but it appears that part of God was birthed out of the spirit and took on material form, that is, took on a material body that embodies both the spirit realm and the newly created physical realm that was to become *the creation*, which is the universe (or, space), as we know it. (Colossians 1:15, 17) (By my reckoning, creation, universe, and space are synonymous.) Many years ago, we attended a conference and one of the speakers was a man who embodies the love of Jesus. He made a statement that seemed to stun many us—Jesus had a body before He came to earth. I

have often thought about this statement, and after all these years, I believe what I have just written is the answer. (However, this brother never explained what he said, so I cannot say that he would totally agree with me.)

Adding to this thought—out from the midst of God came a part of God that we are told is *Son*, meaning there is a familial relationship of Father and Son. The word *Son*, without the definite article, is purposely used to highlight the thought that a concept emerged from God called *Son*. There is some precedence for this, for Hebrews 1:2 could be translated as *God ... has spoken to us in Son*. Most translations insert various words—a *Son*, *the Son*, or *the person of the Son*, with these extra words in *italics*, meaning they are not in the original language. Jesus is *the Son* and *the Son* is the firstborn, etc., but He is representative of a much greater thought in relation to God and the creation that speaks of God as Father in relation to creation as Son. Creation is all about sonship.

Paul expresses this thought of *out from* or *out of* in 1 Corinthians 8:6: *There is one God, the Father, out of Whom all is, and we for Him, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom all is, and we through Him* (CLV). All are out from God, meaning even His Son came out from Him.

A.E. Knoch, in his *Concordant Commentary on the New Testament*, best explains this verse.

We have here a marvelously exact and concise definition of the relationship which we sustain to God and to the Lord, which, in turn, throws much light on their respective relationship to each other. Briefly put, God is the *Source* and *Object* of all; Christ is the *Channel* of all. Thus, it is always found. We are never said to come *out of* Christ, but *out of* God. Indeed, Christ asserts that He Himself, came out of God (John 8:42). All is out of God (Romans 11:36). But God never deals with us except through His Anointed. Creation began *in* the Son of God and was carried out *through* Him. He has the same place in redemption. There is no conflict, for, while the Son, as the Image of the Father, is entitled to be called God and to receive the same honor as the Father, yet He Himself insists that His Father is greater than all (John 10:29). All that He had was received from His Father. His very life was a gift (John 5:26), and He lived by the Father (John 6:57). He did the Father's will, not His own. He was one with the Father, and desired that the disciples might become partakers of that unity (John 17:22). So that He Himself was in every way, *out of* the Father. On the other hand, He is the only Way to the Father, the only means through Whom we may know God. Hence, while all is sourced in God the Father, all is channeled through the Son. It is only by clinging closely to the exact language of Holy Writ that we may hope to gain a clear conception of the relation of the Father to the Son.

We can only imagine the beauty and magnificence of the moment the Son came out from God who is His Father. In this capacity, *Son* became something entirely new. Son came forth from the midst of Father as creation itself—He came forth as creation. Like a seed that contains the tree and its fruit, the Son came forth as the seed of God, the seed of creation that embodied the uncreated spirit of God and the new realm of matter that came forth from God. In a sense, if all things came forth from or out from God, meaning it all came from the very being of God as spirit and became manifested in a material or physical form, is anything truly created? Is all of the universe simply a manifestation of God expressed in a material way?

As shared elsewhere—recently, I was directed by the Lord's spirit to consider the expression *I AM*, based on John 8:58: *Jesus said unto them—Verily, verily, I say unto you: Before, Abraham, came into existence, I, am* (Rotherham). This in turn led me to another verse that I had never read, as translated by Rotherham.

And God said unto Moses, *I Will Become whatsoever I please*, and he said—Thus, shalt thou say to the sons of Israel, *I Will Become* hath sent me unto you. (Exodus 3:14 Rotherham [italic added])

Notice that instead of simply quoting God as the *I AM*, Rotherham reads: *I Will Become whatsoever I please*. This is rather intriguing as it ties in quite well with God expressing Himself as Son. If we accept that Rotherham just might be accurately expressing God's heart, then is it possible that God can and does express Himself in whatever way He so chooses? Is the infinite God restricted to the relational Father and Son? There may be infinite ways in which He can and does express Himself. After all, even in the old testament, God is known by a variety of names. How else will He express Himself in the ages to come and beyond? *I will become unto creation!* Food for thought!

You might want to take a moment to reflect on what you just read.

He is the creator of all things. *In Him (the Son), through Him, and for Him* were created all things. (Colossians 1:16; Revelation 4:11) This is another of Paul's great revelations. All things, that is, the ALL (*ta panta*), were not only created *by Him and for Him* but, most importantly, *in Him*.

See: *Ta Panta-The All* — <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art56.pdf>

When asked how the universe or creation began, the most profound answer is that it began *in God's Son*, the one we call *Jesus or the Christ (Anointed One) of God*. Everything that came forth into the material realm came out of His very being. God is not only spirit and love but also light. Scientists, astrophysicists, and astronomers postulate that the universe began with a big bang of something that transformed into light and consequently into matter. Consider the following quote from a web site titled *All About Science – Big Bang Theory – An Overview*.

Our universe is thought to have begun as an infinitesimally small, infinitely hot, infinitely dense, something—a singularity. Where did it come from? We don't know. Why did it appear? We don't know. ... According to [their] calculations, time and space had a finite beginning that corresponded to the origin of matter and energy. The singularity didn't appear *in space*; rather, space began inside of the singularity. Prior to the singularity, *nothing* existed, not space, time, matter, or energy—nothing. So where and in what did the singularity appear if not in space? We don't know. We don't know where it came from, why it's here, or even where it is. All we really know is that we are inside of it and at one time it didn't exist and neither did we.

What an amazing explanation. The answer to these questions is that at the moment of creation *the something*, the singularity was God's Son. Space as we know it began in the one and only Son (singularity). Where is creation today? It is in the Son! In Him were created all things. Where did

the light come from? It came from God is light. The invisible God of light became the visible light of the Son. Consequently, all matter is from God's Son and is in God's Son.

Interestingly, our universe is made up of visible and invisible matter. The invisible matter is all around us—with our natural eyes, we cannot see it. Nevertheless, it is still part of the material creation. Some scientists believe there is one invisible particle (not seen by the naked eye) that is the genesis of all matter and, as such, has been dubbed *the God particle*. Paul confirms that there is the visible and the invisible in creation, for he defines all things created in the Son as those things in the heavens and on the earth, both visible and invisible, including invisible forces that are at work that he calls thrones (powers), lordships (ownership systems), governments (ruling forces), and authorities. Could we not include the so-called *God particle* and the unseen forces of nature and the universe in this group of the invisible?

By the way—some argue that the universe is not made up of things that came from God. They keep matter entirely separate, as if God made it apart from Himself. They totally reject the idea that everything actually came out from His very being through His Son. They call this *pantheism*—to them, this word is mutually exclusive (can only be used one way, and it is not a good way.) However, at the very core of pantheism is that God is all in all. *Pan* means "all," and *theo* refers to God. I recognize that words, over time, take on different meanings and are often abused in their use. I throw all the controversy of the word over board, so to speak, and embrace it to mean God truly is all in all in His entire creation, for it came from His very being. Many make a big deal over God being eternal—a concept that I find irrelevant. (What matters to humanity is immortality.) Does it really matter that God is outside of time or within time? I don't think so! What really matters is that He is the infinite God. This I believe is so! The infinite God has no bounds and no end in sight. Creating a universe or a billion of them cannot and will not exhaust God's being.

See: *Eternity or Ages? — Eternal or Eonian?* — <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art57.pdf>

He upholds all things by the power of His word. In Him, all things have been permanently placed or hold together in union with Him. He makes all things one unit for the accomplishment of God's purpose. In other words, the Son is not an absent landlord but is actively engaged in creation to fulfill God's purpose of being all in all. The entire creation is His responsibility; consequently, He holds it all together by His power as the word of God, that is, as the very expression, language, and manifestation of God the Father. This does not refer to what we call the *Bible* and many call *the word of God*. The Son is the word of God. The word is a person! He is *the Alpha and the Omega*, the first and last letters of the Greek language, meaning He is the entire language of God that speaks throughout all creation. He not only holds all things together, but all things have been permanently placed in Him. Again, as the above quote implies, we, along with all things, are in Him. If it were possible to blot out the Son, then all creation, including all humanity, would be blotted out as well. He holds it all together as one, to the end that the Father may be all in all. (1 Corinthians 15:28; Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3; Revelation 1:8, 17; 19:13)

Summarizing the truths given so far: He is preeminent or first place in all things (*ta panta*; the All). (Colossians 1:18; 3:11) He is the all in all of creation. Nothing is outside of Him and nothing is before Him or after Him, and all things are in Him. Metaphorically speaking, He is like the tree

and the fruit of the tree that are in the seed. The Son is the seed of God that bears fruit for God. (John 12:24)

So far, these truths stand uniquely in relation to creation, that is, the entire universe (space)—which, of course, includes earth and its inhabitant—man. But, if we were not in existence, these facts would still hold true.

Now, let us consider the answer of who He is more specifically in relation to us (i.e., mankind) on earth.

In Relationship to Humanity

He made the ages, meaning that through the Son, God made the designated periods of time.

He is the beginning of the ages, and He will be the end of the ages, for He is the first and the last, as if He were the bookends of time, as well as the book itself. Time is a creation of the Son and is divided into ages (indefinite periods of time) in which He acts or moves in certain ways as He implements God's plan to achieve His ultimate purpose of all. Regarding our physical earth, nothing in the history of mankind is outside the plan and purpose of God. The plan is that the Son be all in all throughout the ages, and the purpose is that the Father be all in all at the consummation of the ages and beyond. This means that time and ages of time are part of God's plan as the Son and His creation press on toward the consummation of the ages. (Hebrews 1:2; Revelation 1:8, 17)

He is far above every authority, and government, and power, and lordship, and every name being named, not only in this age but in the future ages.

He has all authority in heaven and on earth and is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Messengers (angels) and authorities and powers are subjected to Him. Man may be subject to all types of authorities, both good and evil, in his journey to God's all, but be assured, there is one authority over all authorities, and He is God's Son. No matter what is happening on earth or in individual lives or even in the celestial realm, God's Son reigns supreme. He is over all kings and all lords and all heavenly hosts, regardless of the exact title or name they might hold. (Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:21; 1 Peter 3:22; Revelation 19:16)

He is the heir of all things. The nations are His inheritance and the earth His possession. In other words, man might think he can rule this earth on his own as if he owns it, but he is merely a caretaker at best. As the creator, the Son of God is the rightful owner of the earth and all that is in it. As the firstborn Son, He has the right of inheritance of the nations and the right to exercise all authority over them. (Psalms 2:8; Hebrews 1:2)

He is God's secret in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Man seeks for wealth and money and title and position, thinking these will give him all he needs and wants. But true wealth is in the Son, for He alone is God's treasure given to man, no longer a secret to those whose eyes have been opened to Him. The Son is the wealth of God, God's treasure of all wisdom and knowledge, which is far greater than material comforts and needs. (Colossians 2:3)

All that has been presented so far is foundational to who Jesus is, with emphasis on His sonship because He is Son at the very genesis of creation.

Continuing on—about 6,000 years ago, the Son appeared on a restored earth, took the soil of the earth and formed man to be His image [Hebrew = imaging] on the earth. As the Son imaged His Father, man was formed to image the Son—in His likeness and in His image. The Son of God appeared to the first man, *Adam*, who is also called *son of God*, in a garden planted by Him. Adam is a son of God because he was formed by a direct act of God—begotten of God.

As an aside, there is teaching that says the Father was the one who appeared on earth, but I don't believe this is correct. The Father is the invisible God who does all things through His Son who is His visible image. A proof of this is discovered in a few passages from the ancient prophets, in particular, Isaiah 12:2 (CLV): "*Behold! El is my Salvation. I am trusting in Him and am not afraid. For my Strength and Melody is Yah, Yahweh, and He is becoming mine for salvation.*" This could be rephrased as: *Yahweh has become my Jesus*. In other words, the Yahweh of the ancient days is the Jesus of our modern day.

See: *Yahweh Has Become My Yeshua (Soteria)*: <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art53.pdf>

We can only speculate, but the Son must have appeared to Adam in His original form when He stepped out from the midst of God at the very genesis of creation. His form was of the Son of glory. Could we not say that the Son had a glorified body as He walked in the garden and appeared to Adam? Could we not call this His first presence (coming) to earth to appear before man? Then, 4,000 years later, the firstborn Son returned to this earth, but this time for an entirely different reason. Hebrews 1:6 declares: *And when He [God] again brings the firstborn into the world*. This implies that there was a previous bringing forth of the firstborn into the world, which was His first presence. Then, history tells us that God sent His Son to the inhabitable world nearly 2,000 years ago, and His name is *Jesus*. Again, Paul gives us his revelation of this presence, which is His second presence, at which time He appeared before man in a human body with His glory hidden.

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ [Anointed] Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason, also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ [the Anointed] is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:5-11 NASB)

The Son formed man to be in His image, but then He took on the form of man Himself. He became a man, which means He became His soil-based creation, taking upon Himself a body similar to what He formed from the soil 4,000 years earlier. He emptied Himself, not in some partial way, but totally changed His form that fully hid God's glory from physical sight. He arrived on earth, born of a woman who was overshadowed by the spirit of God. He arrived as all humans do,

through the womb of a woman. However, His heavenly Father begat Him, and He was declared the only begotten Son of God in human form.

It was at this point that He was given the name, *Jesus (Yehoshua/Yeshua* in Hebrew), as given to Joseph in a dream, which means *Savior, Deliverer, Salvation*. It is generally acknowledged that the name *Jesus* was associated entirely with His humiliation on earth. He came to save His people (the Israelite nation/people) from their sins; however, many rejected Him and demanded His crucifixion. This was His immediate purpose, but through the revelation given to Paul, this extended to all the nations (people). He also took on the title or description of *Christ*, which means *Messiah* (Hebrew) or *the Anointed (One)*. The Savior or deliverer is the Anointed of God, meaning He was set apart from the rest of Adam's race, although a man, as God's Anointed Son who came to deliver the rest—in order to fulfill God's ultimate purpose. The anointing was the spirit of God that rested upon Him and dwelt within Him as a man of human flesh and blood. The anointing means the Father is fully vested in Him, and He is fully vested in the Father and His purpose.

But here is the question: To deliver man from what? From death! The greatest enemy of all mankind—and even of the entire creation that is in bondage awaiting the manifestation of the sons of God—is DEATH. Paul calls it the last enemy (1 Corinthians 15:26). To this, we could add that He came to deliver us or save us or rescue us from ourselves and to deliver us unto His Father.

Regardless of one's religious or ideological persuasion, there is one undeniable fact with which all humanity must reckon—we all face death and eventually our bodies die and return to the soil of the earth. Death is man's lot. This is a fact borne out by the countless number of graves in the earth today. Until Jesus, no one had ever come out of the grave to enter glory, except one.

But there is a second undeniable fact—good and evil have persisted throughout the history of man, with evil often appearing to be overtaking good. Large segments of history contain the record of men inflicting evil upon one another. The ages leading up to the Noahic flood and the dark age of medieval Europe were grossly evil periods of history. To this, we could add the many persecutions and tortures by religions of the world that have occurred to purge the so-called *heretics* from their midst. History is strewn with countless examples as men have warred against one another to gain power and control over the lives of the people and to gain riches. We are in such an era at this specific point in history where money rules the day, and rumors and grumblings of wars and revolutions continue to hover over us like a vulture.

It appears that we (humans) need to be saved/delivered from ourselves. But we have no way to deliver ourselves. We are lost in repetitive cycles of good and evil, destined to continue until perhaps, one day, if we could, we might succeed in annihilating our entire human race—God will not allow such a thing and will intervene if it were to come to that. Much of man's history is contrary to the essence of God the Father who is love and His Son whose origin is love. Man was created to be imaging (image bearers of) the love of God toward one another, as well as toward God Himself. Oh, how we have failed! To God, this is called *sin*. Our failure to image God is our sin. As a race, we have fallen short of the mark or goal set for us by God in and through His Son, and our wage (payment) for this is death (Romans 6:23). Who will set us free from this cycle? The

good news is that our creator sets us free by the free gift of the grace of God through *the* faith of the Son who is *the* Faith.

Origin of Evil/Sin

What is the origin of good, evil, sin, and death? This most likely will bring out a strong negative reaction in some (especially the theologians that write tomes on subjects like this), but, based on what limited insight we are given by scripture, it appears the origin might just be from God Himself.

(I have to admit that there is still (perhaps a lot) of mystery in this for me; nevertheless, I give what I see today, with the caveat that it might change in the future. One thought that I have entertained is that evil came from another dimension that invaded ours. How or why there would or could be another dimension contrary to the one Elohim created as very good is obviously way out there in speculation land.)

Back to earth. If all things come forth from God, then how can we eliminate anything, especially when it was Elohim who planted the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden? Where did the concepts of good and evil come from if not from God? One of the ancient prophets gives us the answer as spoken to him by the Lord.

I am Yahweh Elohim, and there is none else. Former of light and Creator of darkness, **Maker of good and Creator of evil**. I, Yahweh Elohim, made all of these things. (Isaiah 45:6-7 CLV [bold added])

This does not mean that evil is in God; simply, it means that He created it, if you will, as a concept, not an essence that springs forth from Him. Whether the record given to us in Genesis about Adam and Eve is a literal story, allegory, metaphor, myth, or some other figure of speech really does not matter. What does matter is the message given to us through the story. What is it telling us? Let us turn to the book of beginnings.

And furthermore, sprouting is Yahweh Elohim from the ground every tree coveted by the sight and good for food, and the tree of the living [i.e., tree of life] in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. ... And taking is Yahweh Elohim the human that he had formed and is leaving him in the garden of Eden to serve it and to keep it. And instructing is Yahweh Elohim the human, saying, "From every tree of the garden, you are to eat, yea, eat. Yet from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you are not to be eating from it, for in the day you eat from it, to die shall you be dying. (Genesis 2:9, 15-17 CLV)

Again, whether literal or not, the trees represent two things: life and death; and this is what was placed before Adam, prior to Eve being formed from a part (rib) out of his side. It appears that Elohim's intent (will) for Adam was to receive life first and then knowledge, for only in this way could he truly handle the knowledge of good and evil without missing the mark of Elohim. He was not denying man knowledge, but there was a divine order to receiving this knowledge. Taking knowledge before life itself would only lead to death, and this is what happened.

As the story goes, Eve sought knowledge over life, and Adam followed. Consequently, the tree of the living was barred to them and all their progeny, and death entered into the body of mankind to be passed down to everyone born of Adam's race. So, as a result of this one transgression (i.e., sin or missing the mark or goal of God), death became man's lot that has continued to our very day. Paul sums it up for us.

Therefore, even as through one man sin entered into the world, and through sin death, and thus death passed through into all mankind, on which all sinned. (Romans 5:12 CLV)

Through one man's sin, death passed through into all mankind, and, because of death, all mankind sin or fall short of God's mark, which is the image of His Son. Man falls short because he has a death sentence in his body, and sin reigns in death. To emphasize the point, Adam's sin came first, followed by death; thus, sin led to death. In our day, death leads to sin, meaning sin follows death. This is the divine order, just as the tree of the living, which signifies God's Son, is the first in the divine order.

Why Adam chose knowledge over life is open for speculation. Most commentators, if not all, place it in the realm of *free will*. I do not, for free will is a flawed concept.

See: *Whose Will Saves—God's or Man's?*: <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art33.pdf>

In my thinking, there is no such thing as free will, for there is only one thing that is free, and that is God's grace through *the* faith of His Son. There is such a thing as choice, however. Adam made a choice in that day which I believe was fully expected by Elohim, if not demanded. Adam chose the love of his life, the woman that came from his side, from his own flesh. It was love that led him to follow her, either to try to save her or to share in her fate. He was driven by love. *Husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies ... for no man ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it* (Ephesians 5:28, 29). In this way, the first Adam is a type of the last Adam, the second man. According to Paul, Adam was a type of the one to come (Romans 5:14). He was a type of love, only he could neither save himself nor his wife from death; only the last Adam can, does, and will do this. Nevertheless, the great lesson of Genesis 2-3, as given to us by Jesus, is: *Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends* (John 15:13). Adam laid down his life for Eve as a foreshadow of the manifestation of a greater love that was to come 4,000 years later. The stage was set for love to conquer sin and death through the one known as Jesus who being found in appearance as a man humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

See: *Adam Loved His Body* — <https://kingdomandglory.com/tuc/tuc590.pdf>

As the only begotten Son of God, Jesus walked this earth as the perfect man. He never sinned; He perfectly did the will of His Father throughout His entire journey on earth. The creator came to die for His creation, although He had never sinned or missed the mark of God as a full-blooded man of flesh and bones, not some spirit occupying a body, as some have taught. He was all man, yet without sin. He knew no sin, yet He took on death as if a sinner. He was crucified on a cross as if He were a criminal deserving death. The Jewish religious leaders of His day proclaimed He deserved death merely because He factually and truthfully claimed to be the Son of God (John

19:7) as well as Israel's God and Messiah, not because He had committed some heinous sin against humanity. They were blinded by their own agenda and drive for power and control over the people. This is what the religions of men do best. But others, not tied to religion, could see the truth. One of the criminals who was dying on a cross near Jesus declared: *This man has done nothing wrong* (Luke 23:41). A centurion keeping guard over Jesus became very frightened by all that was happening and declared: *Truly this was the Son of God* (Matthew 27:54).

The good news is that the grave could not hold Him—He had no sin that death could hold over Him. Take special note that this was the exact same position that the first Adam found himself in, only he had sin that led to death. This is another reason why the first Adam was a type of the last Adam, only the first failed and the second succeeded.

Consequently, Jesus was resurrected (raised up) from among the dead by His Father, according to the spirit of holiness (Romans 1:4). The Anointed One could not be held by death—He defeated death and took hold of the keys of death and hades (the unseen, the state of the dead). His declaration is: *Do not fear! I am the First and the Last, and the Living One: and I became dead, and lo! living am I for the eons of the eons. (Amen!) And I have the keys of death and of the unseen* (Revelation 1:17-18 CLV). He has taken hold of the power of death over mankind, and He is now the life-giver to all mankind. He is a life-giving spirit of flesh and bones but no blood (1 Corinthians 15:45, 50). He is the celestial (heavenly) man energized by the spirit of God, no longer with blood coursing through His body. His blood has been poured out or shed for all mankind; there is no more need for the blood or for sacrifices. It is done! He is the last and greatest of the sacrifices. *We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us.* And, His Father raised Him from among the dead in accord with His perfect life of obedience to the will of God.

Paul sums up the good news that he delivered.

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ... and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also. (1 Corinthians 15:3-5, 8 NASB)

For Paul, the appearance of Jesus to him was on the road to Damascus.

As proof that He was raised from the dead, over 500 saw Jesus after His resurrection before He ascended back to His Father in heaven. Forty days after His death and ten days prior to the day of Pentecost, Jesus, who had presented Himself alive to His apostles, appeared for the last time and ascended in a cloud before their very eyes. Two men in white clothing stood beside them and said: *This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven* (Acts 1:11). They confirmed that Jesus will one day return to this earth. For believers, it is called *His presence*. By my reckoning, this will be His third presence.

Firstborn from the Dead

Now, moving on, Paul laid down the first truth of the Son as the firstborn of creation, but then gave us another truth about being the firstborn.

He is the firstborn from the dead, so that in all things He might have the preeminence.
(Colossians 1:18 ASV)

This means that no one had ever been raised from the dead to ascend into glory with an immortal life, that is, a life no longer subjected to death and its companion, sin. Jesus is the firstborn from the dead, meaning He is alive, the first in a long line of many that follow Him out from the grave. To the glory of God, all humanity will eventually follow His path, for this is the only way for Him to be preeminent or to have the first place in all things.

Again, Paul tells us: *For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf* (2 Corinthians 5:14-15).

Don't miss the import of this: One died for all; consequently, all died. Christ died for all and took all into the grave with Him. If all died, then how does anyone come alive again? There is none righteous (i.e., right by God), not even one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks for God; there is none who does good (see Romans 3:10-18). This seems to put all of us in one basket, so to speak. Then, how will all be made alive (i.e., conquer death)? In Christ! We cannot do it in our own right. It is all the Lord's doing. By the spirit of the Lord, He makes all alive, for His Father has given Him the life (John 5:26). *In Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. But each in their own order* (1 Corinthians 15:22-23). This is the good news of the one who conquered death for His creation.

The first order comprises those who belong to the Lord in this age because, by the grace of God, they have been given His faith to believe and are now part of His body, which is the *ecclesia* or what many call the *church* (Colossians 1:18). Life is given to His body first, for it is through this vessel that the plan of the ages is accomplished, which is to sum up or head up all things in the Christ (Ephesians 1:10) in the ages to come. The body of Christ is His complement through whom He will fill all in all. Paul reminds the body of Christ: *For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God* (Colossians 3:3), and *you are now seated with Christ in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus, having obtained every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ* (Ephesians 2:6; 1:3).

Much more could be written about the body of Christ, but it is beyond the scope of this article. However, it is injected here in case some might think I have overlooked such an important and vital truth, but even this truth must be seen through the answer to the question: *Who are You, Lord?*

Saving, delivering, or rescuing (I like all these words) the dead from death is an act of God according to His grace and the faith of the Son of God, for *scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe* (Galatians 3:22). Who will believe? It is my view that, eventually, everyone will believe, but not necessarily

in this age—most likely, it will take ages. God alone breaks into lives, but He does it in His timing; some now, some later, some at the consummation of the ages. The Son who is *the* faith will give to everyone at some point in time His faith to believe in Him. How do we know? Because every knee will *willingly* bow and every tongue will *willingly* confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. In Christ, all will be made alive! All will be brought into Christ so that He will be all in all, then He will deliver up the kingdom to His Father so that God may be all in all throughout all creation. This is the good news.

Again, Paul, adds further proof of this good news by bringing in the concept of peace with God. *Conciliation* is when one person makes peace with another; *reconciliation* is when both parties are at peace with one another.

God was in Christ, conciliating the world to Himself, not reckoning their offenses to them....
(2 Corinthians 5:19 CLV)

And through Him to reconcile all to Him (making peace through the blood of His cross), through Him, whether those on the earth or those in the heavens. (Colossians 1:20 CLV)

Alternate rendering:

Through the Son, then, God decided to bring the whole universe back to himself. God made peace through his Son's blood on the cross and so brought back to himself all things, both on earth and in heaven. (Colossians 1:20 GNB)

Through the Son and His death on a cross and subsequent resurrection into life, the Father has waved the white flag of truce, so to speak. He has declared peace with mankind and is not holding mankind's offenses against them. All the offenses have been laid on His Son, who is the Lamb slain to take away the sin of the world (John 1:29).

See: *Reconciliation of All Things* — <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art51.pdf>

Why Death?

The only question left is: Why did God create death and allow it to enter mankind?

First, Adam's transgression was no surprise to God. In fact, it was expected, for love demanded it. The entire plan of God, as it has played out and will continue to be played out in this age and the ones to come, was set before the very foundation of this earth was laid. Peter declared: *This Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power* (Acts 2:23-24). The *Son is the Lambkin slain from the disruption (down-casting; foundation) of the world* (Revelation 13.8 CLV), meaning He was known before the disruption of the world (1 Peter 1:20), further proving that His death was planned by God before the world was.

Again, quoting A.E. Knoch from his *Concordant Commentary on the New Testament*, based on 1 Peter 1:20:

The fact that Christ's sacrifice was foreknown even before the disruption throws a marvelous light upon God's plan and purpose. It shows that sacrifice is not an afterthought intended to repair an unforeseen disaster, but that it precedes sin, and that sin was introduced to give it occasion. Speaking as a man, there never would have been sin unless God had previously prepared a Sacrifice, and neither should be considered by itself, but as one of the necessary factors in God's great purpose to reveal the deep recesses of His love and the boundless expanse of His affections.

Another proof of God's predetermined plan is found in the book of beginnings where we are told that, in the third day of restoring the earth, Elohim spoke forth plants that yield seeds (Genesis 1:11). The whole concept of the seed plays a major role in God's plan and is a study all on its own. Seeds contain life in the form of genetic material that is the blueprint of the life that will come forth from the seed, whether plants or animals or humans. But the seed must be planted and die to its seed form in order for life to come forth. In humans, the egg sits in the womb of the woman and the sperm from the man impregnates the egg and life begins to form, but the egg and the sperm must die to their form to yield an embryo until, finally, a fully developed infant emerges from the womb that looks nothing like the egg or the sperm. So, it is with plants. Carrying the metaphor forward, both examples bear fruit by procreating others of like kind.

The Lambkin slain was the seed of God that fell into the womb of the earth (soil) and died to bear many in His image. Jesus tells us so.

And Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour [i.e., death and resurrection] has come for the Son of Man to be glorified [i.e., ascended and exalted on high]. "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain [i.e., kernel of seed] of wheat falls into the earth and dies [i.e., on a cross], it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit [i.e., a New Creation, many sons of God in His image and likeness]." (John 12:23-24 NASB [added by writer])

The good news is that He was raised up out of the grave as a new creation—a man who had conquered death, no longer subject to death in any manner. He defeated death for all of mankind. He is the Son of God and the immortal son of man. He is the heavenly man, both of God and of man.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away. Behold, all things have become new. (2 Corinthians 5:17 WEBA)

He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." (Revelation 21:5 WEBA)

In Christ is a new creation! (Galatians 6:15)

This is why we are encouraged to eagerly wait for the Anointed One—the King, and engage in His work in the meantime.

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. (Philippians 3:20-21 NASB)

All three of His presences are unique, for it seems the Son has taken on different bodies or forms each time. Perhaps a better way to state this is that He goes from glory to glory, with His third presence manifesting the highest point of glory, for He has joined both God and man in a new glorified body that is called a *new creation*, and this is the body the sons of God will receive that is reserved for them in heaven—which comes about on earth (in air) when Jesus comes, not in death prior to then. As I see it, this does not imply going to heaven. As Paul wrote: *Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly* (1 Corinthians 15:49). *When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory* (Colossians 3:4).

What Kind of Body?

But, what will this heavenly body, this body of His glory, be like? The best indication that we are given is when Jesus appeared to His disciples after He was raised from among the dead. Mark records that the Lord Jesus appeared in a different form to two disciples while they were walking along on their way in the country (Mark 16:12). Luke records a more detailed incident as Jesus walked with two disciples on the road to Emmaus. *But their eyes were prevented from seeing Him* (Luke 24:16). It wasn't until they broke bread with Him that they recognized Him (Luke 24:31). Some might assume that somehow Jesus simply put some sort of veil over their sight, but if we combine this with what Mark recorded, it is obvious that they were prevented from seeing Him because He appeared in a different form. John records that the Lord appeared to His disciples in a room with shut doors (John 20:19). In other words, He simply appeared in their midst, not being restricted in any way by closed doors. After eight days, they were again in a locked room and He appeared in their midst (John 20:26). John records the third manifestation of the Master to His disciples as He stood on the beach and they were out in the sea fishing. *But when the day was now breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know it was Jesus* (John 21:4). Why did they not know it was their Lord? We might be tempted to think that they were too far from shore to recognize Him, but this cannot be the explanation. John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, realized who it was and told Peter: *It is the Lord* (John 21:7). But a few verses later, it is recorded that none of the disciples ventured to question Him: *Who are You? knowing that it was the Lord* (John 21:12). This is a rather curious statement. They had seen Him twice before as He appeared in the room with closed doors. This time they knew it was Him because John sensed His presence, perhaps sensing the loving word of the Master; but it is obvious that they did not know Him by His appearance. Why? Because He appeared to them in a different form *again!*

(In our physical world, we look at objects as solid in nature. For example, the desk upon which my computer sits at this very moment of writing has a definite form and appears solid. I can knock on it, move it around, grab or touch it, or do anything with it. If I walk into the next room and return, I expect the desk to be in the same place I left it as a seemingly solid object. I say *seemingly* because to our human eye it appears solid. However, under microscopic examination, the desk is actually quite porous—it has all sorts of holes or gaps in it. Further, if we could magnify our

examination even further, we would see atoms (and all various sub-atomic particles down to the **God particle**) coursing through the desk without reservation or hindrance. In my imagination, I see Jesus' new creation body acting in the same way as if, in order to traverse all realms, this body must and does operate at something like the sub-atomic level. Just thinking out loud!

Back to earth again. Take special note of the question the disciples were afraid to ask Jesus: *Who are You?* This is the same question that came out of Paul's mouth. It appears we have good company if this question comes to us. It is the question of the ages!

So, what are we to infer from the manifestations of the Lord Jesus to His disciples? He was not restricted by physical space (i.e., walls). He appeared and disappeared at will. When He did appear, He took on different forms (i.e., looks), not necessarily the same one each time. In other words, the physical was not a hindrance to Him—in fact, He could alter His own appearance in the physical world. It seems to me that the Lord Jesus was manifesting what it looks like when heaven and earth become one in the ages to come. Being immortal means one can and will live in both realms simultaneously and be able to traverse both realms, not hindered by the space-time continuum as we know it—equally comfortable in both dimensions. This intimates the kind of body reserved for us. As an aside, John the apostle wasn't sure what we will be like (i.e., what kind of body). But he was sure of one thing: *We know that when He appears (is manifested), we will be like Him, because we will see Him as He is* (1 John 3:2).

One final note about the disciples. Prior to His transfiguration, Jesus asked them the very same question we are probing: *But who do you say that I am? Simon Peter answered, You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God* (Matthew 16:15-16). Amen!

All in Gestation—Seed Form

Now, back to the question: Why did God bring death to enter creation, especially into His image-bearing race? Some might believe that death did not start with God as if He simply allowed it; even so, the question of why still stands. Then, why did He allow it?

In my view, it was the only way for us to know true love, to know God is love and His Son whose origin is love. The entire story of death to life, from beginning to end, is a love story about His Son, written by God for Adam's race. Seeds hold the very essence of "God is love" in their genetic makeup. They must fall into the ground and die to release the love of God in its fullness. And, so it will be.

All creation is in the womb of God, and that is what the universe is. Creation is the seed of God filling space. Earth is another seed of God that was planted in the midst of the universe. It too is in the womb of God. Mankind is yet another seed of God that was planted in the soil of the earth. Individually, we are seeds of God. But there is another truth—for those who have the faith of Jesus and believe in this day—the seed of God resides in them as well. And, this seed is in gestation awaiting its birth as a glorified son of God. Whenever Christ is manifested, we will be manifested with Him in glory (Colossians 3:4).

All creation is in gestation waiting, anticipating, expecting the presence of God's consummate seed that died and rose up to fill all creation with His life and with the love of God. This is the fruit of the seed.

For the premonition of the creation is awaiting the unveiling of the sons of God. For to vanity was the creation subjected, not voluntarily, but because of Him Who subjects it, in expectation that the creation itself, also, shall be freed from the slavery of corruption into the glorious freedom of the children of God. For we are aware that the entire creation is groaning and travailing together until now. Yet not only so, but we ourselves also, who have the firstfruit of the spirit, we ourselves also, are groaning in ourselves, awaiting the sonship, the deliverance of our body." For to expectation were we saved. Now expectation, being observed, is not expectation, for what anyone is observing, why is he expecting it also? Now, if we are expecting what we are not observing, we are awaiting it with endurance."
(Romans 8:19-25 CLV)

Dear beloved, this day is coming. It is the day of Christ, the day of sonship! It is the day when the many sons are brought to the glory of the Son, conformed to His image so that they will image Him perfectly throughout creation. Do you long for it?

It will be the beginning of glory that is beyond imagination as all creation and all humanity are continually brought into the all new of God the Father and His Son whose origin is love! Until the consummation of all the ages!

Who are You, Lord?

The ultimate answer is ... LOVE!