
Who is the God of the Old Testament?

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Now we all operate on assumptions, little theories of life, of which we are largely unaware. We don't realize that we are assuming things. We don't realize we are taking them for granted. That's what taking them for granted means, you don't have to think about it, so it's a part of your life vision or world view as some people like to call it. It is all in there and it has been in there for years. You built it up over time and you don't have to think about it. That's why you're comfortable with it.

Assumptions

What you need to understand is, that the little assumptions that exist that you live with day in and day out, can be major factors in your lack of understanding of things you really need to understand. They can be a major barrier to understanding. Now one of the ways you know that there is something wrong is when these assumptions, these things that you live with and work with all of your life, and they range all the way from simple little assumptions like, the Safeway store has been open on Sunday, it is open 24 hours a day, and this is Sunday and since it is Sunday, and since it is open 24 hours a day, I assume that it is open. I don't pick up the phone to call them before I drive down there. I jump in my car, drive 6 miles down to the Safeway store, and I do this on the assumption that the store is open.

We assume all kinds of things. We assume when we get on an airliner to fly from one place to another that it has been inspected. We assume that the pilot who is at the controls of this airliner has certain training. We just accept these things. We have been told by somebody, somewhere, sometime, or we know the government would not let him be up there if he wasn't qualified to be up there. We know this, and we know that. We think we know all kinds of things that we really don't know. We just assume them, and we have to. It's all part of living, you can't know everything you need to know. You certainly can't even come close to knowing everything you might want to know, so you assume.

Assumptions Being Challenged

What was happening to me in 1958, is that one assumption after another was being challenged. Some of them were pivotal. Some of them I did not even necessarily realize that I held, and yet

they laid right at the crossroads at the intersection of all kinds of things that I believed about the Bible, that I believed about God, that I believed about God's will. I believed in Jesus Christ. I believe that I wanted to do God's will, and yet I had assumed certain things about God's will that had kept me from understanding His will. Very pivotal things that laid right at the crux of what Christianity is all about.

The Identity of the God of the Old Testament

One of these pivotal positions for me is what I want to talk to you about, is the identity of the God of the Old Testament. Now that may sound kind of strange to your ears, for me to say that. Why in the world should I have had a problem with my assumption, relative to the identity of the God of the Old Testament? What do you mean? The God of the Old Testament is God. What do you mean you didn't know about His identity? What I mean is something very important. I had assumed that the God, or LORD as He is called in the Old Testament was the Father of Jesus Christ.

Notice in your Old Testament, they generally have the term LORD in all capital letters, and that is from the Hebrew word YHVH, which the King James translation of the Bible in four places translates it as Jehovah.

Jehovah, basically is the name of the God of the Old Testament. I had assumed, all my life, that the God of the Old Testament, the LORD of the Old Testament, was the Father of Jesus Christ. That He was the one and Jesus was the other.

My secondary assumption was that Jesus came into existence at his birth, some 2000 years ago, and that prior to that time, Jesus, as I know Him, Jesus the Christ, did not exist, or that the mind or the being behind it did not exist.

A related assumption was, that Jesus and the Father are discreet beings, in the same way that my father and I were discreet beings, while he was alive. He could be in Houston and I could be here, or I could be in Europe, and he could be in Texas. We could have had difficulty in communicating, unless it was by letter or telephone, that's all we could do, because we couldn't see each other.

I had sort of assumed, because that was the way the Bible seemed to present God to me, that's the way the Father and His Son was, that God was one and Christ was another, and always when I used the term God, I basically referred to the one that Jesus called His Father. In other words, Jesus was here, God was there, and even though theologically in an argument or a theological discussion, I might be able to agree that Jesus was God, yet still in my fundamental assumptions, Jesus is here, God is there, because didn't Jesus pray to God? (Matthew 6:9).

Now if you start with these assumptions, if this is all down in you, and you come to certain Scriptures, they will seem to confirm what you are assuming to be true. Take, for example, the first chapter of Hebrews, which is where we will start today.

Hebrews chapter 1 and verse one, "God, who at various times and in diverse manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, {2} Has in these last days spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds, {3} Who being the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person, upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. {4} Being made so much better than the angels, as he has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."

Articulate Your Assumptions

Now just think about that for a moment. Here we are being told that God in time past, spoke to the fathers by the prophets. Now in these last days He speaks to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things. Father, Son. Son's inherit. The prophets are over here, and the Son is over there. Both of them are means by which God speaks to the world. And so, you read that, and you would think, well, that certainly sounds like the description I gave you earlier of what my assumptions were, and based on those assumptions, I would've read this Scripture that way. Now what's funny about this is, that I had never in my life, I don't think up until that point in time, some 30 years ago, articulated those assumptions. I had never tried to sit down with myself or with another person and explain to them, "Here's the Father. Here's the Son. Here's God. Here's the son."

I do remember once, struggling for all of 15 minutes with the subject of the Trinity, and giving up. I gathered it in among my assumptions, put it on the shelf, went on my way, it was there, as were the other things. I say they were not articulated.

The Reality of God

Now we need to remember that God reveals Himself in certain ways to us, in ways that He is attempting to help us to understand and interpret in ways He thinks we will understand.

The reality of God is at times truly beyond our ability to grasp. If we were to come into the presence of God, we would not be able to look upon Him and live. His brightness, his glory, and of course when you are dealing with that kind of relationship, it is very difficult for a person, for a human being, to be able to understand it.

We Assume God Means What We Want Him to Mean

Now we also assume that God means what we want him to mean. In other words, when you approach a Scripture with all of your assumptions, you basically want God to mean what you're expecting, you will actually read into the things He tells you, things that you expect to see there and want to see there.

Now we are going to see, as we take a look at these assumptions, is that assumption true? We are going to see some things that are rather damaging to it. I want you to take your Bible and turn back with me to the first chapter of John, to one of the most fundamental Scriptures, and

certainly when it comes to the study of Jesus Christ, the New Testament and the nature of God, the nature of the Father, that you will ever encounter.

Contradictory to my Assumptions

John the first chapter beginning in verse one, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. {2} The same was in the beginning with God."

Now right off the bat, I have to struggle with something here, because to say that the Word was with God and the Word was God is contradictory to my assumptions. I assume that when one thing is with another thing, they are not the same thing. In other words, if I am with you, we are two people. Aren't we? I cannot be with you and be you, Of course, I can't be you anyway. All I can be is with you. But here we're talking about something that is 'with'.

Now I have my Bible with my notes. My notes are not my Bible and my Bible is not my notes. And yet if I say, "My notes are with my Bible and my notes are my Bible," I have in the English language given you a contradictory statement. I will also tell you that it is contradictory, internally contradictory, in Greek. If you assume that our level of understanding existence is all there is, if the level of which you and I are able to understand existences in relationships, is the truth. The reality and all there are, that assumption leaves this verse total gibberish

Word and Logos

Verse 1 of John 1 says, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Now another thing that gives you a problem, language is such a difficult thing we deal with from time to time. A 'word' to me is something that is printed on this page or spoken from my lips. 'Now' is a word. 'Word' is a word. 'This' is a word. They are printed, they are spoken, they are written, scribbled in longhand. These are words.

Now is that what we are talking about here? 'The 'Word was God'. For if that's true, then we have a word, God is nothing but a 'word' or a 'word' has been elevated to God.

You do see the difficulties you deal with and how we take and glide right over many of these difficulties because of assumptions that we make.

Now fortunately for us, John did not stop here, because we are able to go a little further and understand what it is that he is saying. Because of the confusion many theologians like to go away from the English word 'word' here and use the Greek word 'logos.' LOGOS would be the transliteration into English and by using the word 'Logos' they are able to remind you that what we're reading here means something a little bit more than just a 'word' spoken out of somebody's mouth. And so, a theologian will say, that "The Logos was with God, and the Logos was God,

the same was in the beginning with God, all things were made by Him." That is by the Logos, by the 'Word.'

Now generally an assumption in most people's minds is, that it was God who created and indeed it was, but the problem is, what do they mean when they say God is, that it was the Father who created, that the Father is the God of the Old Testament. He is the one who created the heavens and the earth.

Now here, though, we are told that the Logos was God. Does that mean that the Father is not? Is the Logos something other than the Father? Now I realize that all these things flowing out at you here can become very confusing very quickly because what I am asking you to do, is to think below your assumptions, to move down beneath them, and to see what's there, if anything, and to ask questions about them. Are these things true? Is this what this really means? Does this mean what I have always thought that it meant?

Now what this verse is about to tell you is, that this Logos, who was with God, and was God, created the heavens and the earth. In simple terms, it says, verse 4, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men. {5} The light shines in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. {6} There was a man sent from God, whose name was John."

Oh, now at last, we have gotten to something I can understand. Here's a man with two feet, two arms and two legs and eyes and ears, and so forth. He was sent by God. He had a name and his name was John. This is something I can get with.

Verse 7, "The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe, {8} He, John, was not that Light, he was sent to bear witness of the Light. {9} That was the true Light, that lights every man that comes into the world. {10} He was in the world. The world was made by him."

Now mind you, we have two things for this one we are talking about. He is called the 'Word.' He's identified as God. He is identified as Light and He is identified as the creator.

"The world was made by him, but the world did not know him. {11} He came to his own, and his own received him not, {12} As many as received him, then gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name, {13} Who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of flesh, nor the will of man, but of God."

Now any Christian reading this is going to begin very rapidly, saying to himself, "Why that is Jesus. That has to be Jesus." When we are talking about those who receive Him and given the power to those who believe on his name, to become eternal, and become the sons of God, that has to be Jesus, for there is no other name given for by we must be saved, other than the name of Jesus (Acts 4:12).

It goes on to say in verse 14, "The Word was made flesh."

Now I know of no argument advanced by any theologian anywhere that argues that the Father, what we think of when we call him the Father, was made flesh. It was the Son of God who was made flesh. Right? It was the Logos or the Word that was made flesh, and the one who was God who was made flesh, was able to pray, saying "Father" to someone else, and that is the one that you and I refer to as the Father. Now we sometimes forget that sons can also be fathers, because they can also beget other children. And one who is a father can become a grandfather, and so on. We are able to forget that is very possible for Jesus also to be referred to as father and indeed He is in the pages of our Bible.

Now He goes on to say in verse 14, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

Why is all this important? It is important for this reason, we are very rapidly as we come down to this verse identifying the Word, the Logos, as the one who became what we know as Jesus Christ. Right? We have suddenly found that this Logos was the creator of the world on to which He came, and up and down He walked.

Therefore, this Word was in the beginning with God. Which means that the one who became flesh, existed before His human birth. There went one of my assumptions out the window.

Now as I said, I had not really articulated that as an assumption, but I sort of thought that way and whenever I was thinking about Jesus and thinking about the Bible, all of this was laying in the back of my mind and determining some of the channels in which my thoughts ran. The way in which I evaluated Scriptures, and in a way which I responded to these Scriptures and dealt with them.

Jesus Existed Before Abraham

Now all of a sudden, I was face-to-face with another question. This one, whom I have come to know as Jesus, and I had long since been baptized, had the Holy Spirit and I was a Christian, and I was trying to live a Christian life, and all of a sudden I realized that this Jesus, that I had heard about, read about, believed in, existed long before He came into being as Jesus of Nazareth and was born of the Virgin Mary, that He was in the beginning with God, and He made the heavens, the earth and all things.

Now that, as I said changed some of my assumptions and when those assumptions began to change, other assumptions also had to change.

Now He goes on to say in verse 14 of John 1, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. We beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. {15} John bore witness of him, and cried, saying, "This was he of whom I spoke, He that comes after me is preferred before me, for he was before me."

Notice that Jesus existed long before John. By the way, John was born before Jesus was born.

Verse 16, "And of his fullness we have all received, grace for grace, {17} For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. {18} No man has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father. He has declared Him."

A Weak Assumption

Now you could wish that the writers in the Bible were as careful with their words as we would like to pretend that they are. This is another assumption that we tend to live by. We tend to assume that if a word means one thing in one place, it has to mean that everywhere else. This is weak assumption.

You'll find any number of illustrations where it is not so. This is a simple illustration; you and I would like to construct nice neat little theologies around the use of certain words for law. We would like to talk about the law of God as opposed to the law of Moses. You would like to talk about the Ten Commandments as opposed to ceremonial law. We would like to talk about commandments, his statutes and judgments as though these were completely different sets of laws and you can always tell by the wording used by a Biblical writer exactly what he was talking about. NOT So! They are just not that careful. You don't have to worry though about that.

No Man Has Seen God the Father

Generally speaking, you can know what we are talking about when, Jesus says, "No man has seen God at any time" (John 1:18). He is saying, "There is somebody of the Godhead, upon whom no man has ever laid eyes." He makes it clear that we have, seen the Son. Therefore, the one we have not seen is the Father. That little construction is very easy to follow. We have seen the Son. We have not seen the Father.

Now there are some things I think are very important for us here. There is another item to look at, John chapter five and verse 37. Jesus said, "The Father himself, which has sent me has borne witness of me. You have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape."

Here is the distinguishing thing that we need to understand in what Jesus is talking about, that "No man has seen God at any time," it is the Father that He is talking about.

Now keeping these things in mind, let's turn back to Colossians, this was one of the things that again had to change some of the way we look at God.

Jesus is the Creator

In Colossians chapter 1 beginning in verse 12, "Giving thanks unto the Father, which has made us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, {13} Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, has translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son, {14} In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."

Now all of us who are Christians of whatever stripe, are on very familiar and comfortable ground so far.

Paul then says, {15} "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. {16} For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, dominions, principalities, or powers, all things were created by him and for him. {17} He is before all things, and in him all things consist."

What are you going to do with that? There isn't any way of getting around what we are dealing with here. Paul is talking about Jesus Christ. He said, {18} "He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he might have the preeminence." Jesus is the creator.

Every throne that has ever existed on the face of this earth, from the time man first put a kingdom together, whether it be Jewish, whether it be Gentile, whatever it may be, owes its ultimate authority to the one you and I have come to know as Jesus Christ.

The creation, all things, this world is a thing, isn't it? The ground, the earth, the grass, the mountains, the trees, all things were created by Him. Who? By the Son, Jesus Christ. There is not any way around it

Years ago, I received some church literature, and I stuck my nose right down into some of these truths, and my assumptions went right out the window, because I had assumed, when I went back into Genesis and it said, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, and He rested on the seventh day." I read all these things, and I absolutely thought the Father was doing all of these things. That it was the Father who created Adam out of the dust of the ground, that it was the Father who breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, that it was the Father who designed and brought these things into existence. It was the Father who took Adam's rib and closed up his side and made a woman out of it. It was the Father who rested on the seventh day. NO, it was not.

Through the eyes of John, through the eyes of all the apostles, who had born witness of Jesus and what He did, who tell us that, Jesus was the creator. He was the one who made Adam, He was the one made crocodiles and alligators. He was the one who did all things. The one who finally came into the world and the world was made by him and the world didn't even know its maker.

Now to me that was a pretty important change in my understanding of God's word and what He was trying to tell me. It also had to get nailed in a little further for me as I looked a little further.

Jesus Was Moses' God

Let's turn back to Hebrews the 11th chapter, I had to come to realize that Jesus was Moses' God. When Moses was talking about God, and when Moses was talking with God, and when God was talking to Moses and when Moses heard the voice of God, it was not the Father, it was the one you and I call Jesus Christ. Moses was talking to Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 11 in verse 24, "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, {25} Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than enjoy the pleasures of sin for season, {26} Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than

the treasures in Egypt, for he had respect for the recompense of the reward. {27} By faith he forsook Egypt."

Faith in who? Christ! Moses did not know him as Jesus. Moses did not call Him, Christ. He did not use those words, those phonetic sounds never past his lips. But the one he talked to, the one he trusted, the one he believed in, and the one for whom he denied and forsook the riches of Egypt was the Son, the Logos, the Christ. Here, of course, is the simple witness to that effect.

Jesus Was the Spiritual Rock in the Old Testament

But if you need another witness, let's turn back to first Corinthians. Some people believe that this is a separate witness, not believing that Paul wrote Hebrews.

First Corinthians chapter 10 verse one. "Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant in how that our fathers were all under the cloud, all past through the sea, {2} And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and the sea. {3} They all ate the same spiritual meat, {4} They all drank the same spiritual drink, for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ."

There went some more of my assumptions out the window. I had to own up to the fact, that the one that Moses had listened to and talked to, that the one who gave them the pillar of fire and a cloud to follow, and the one who opened the Red Sea, the one who was with Israel and gave them food to eat and water to drink, was the Father. NO, it was not! It was Christ, who was with them, walked with them, spent time with them in the wilderness.

Jesus Was the God of Abraham

Now that's not the end of the story. Let's turn back to the book of John, this time to the eighth chapter, we will find out something more.

John chapter 8 and verse 52, " The Jews said to Jesus, "We know that you have a demon now, because Abraham is dead." Jesus had been talking to them about some things about Abraham. "Abraham is dead, and the prophets, and you say, "If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death." Can't be! Abraham kept God's word, and he died. {53} "Are you greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? Whom do you make yourself out to be?" Who do you think you are? {54} Jesus answered and said, "If I honor myself, my honor is nothing, it is my Father that honors me, of whom you say, He is your God. {55} You have not known him, but I know him. And if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like you, but I know him, and I keep his sayings. {56} Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, he saw it and was glad."

Do you realize what Jesus is saying? He is saying that "Abraham rejoiced to see my day," but Abraham was dead, and Abraham was buried. Abraham was not there, and the Jews said, {57} "Look, you are not 50 years old, have you seen Abraham?" [58} Jesus said, "Verily I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am."

Once again, our language fails us a little bit. This is an unusual construction, we would never say anything quite like that, but it is accurate. It's intentional. It is accurate in English and it is accurate Greek. Abraham was. He is past tense, he is history. He is over, he is no longer here. His bones are moldering away in a grave somewhere down in Palestine. I probably stood within a few yards where Abraham is buried. He is dead.

But Jesus said, "Before Abraham was, I am." "I am" is an expression that just basically encompasses, actually denies time. It exists outside of time. Jesus existed before Abraham, during Abraham's day, and beyond Abraham's day, and here He is standing upon the face of the earth saying, "Before Abraham was, I am." He could have said, "I was" and He would've said one thing, but He didn't feel that was quite accurate, so He said, "I am." Of course, this was one version of His name, which He gave to Moses, when Moses wanted to know what his name was. He told Moses to say, "I am has sent you" (Exodus 3:14).

Now did the Jews understand what Jesus was saying? Verse 59, it says, "They all took up stones to cast at Him, but Jesus passed in the midst and escaped from them." The Jews accused him of blasphemy, they really believed that He was a blasphemer when He made that statement.

Now we need to see then that Jesus was the God of Abraham. This is a rather profound statement. With that in mind let's turn back to Genesis chapter 18, and we will put a couple more Scriptures together and think a little bit about what we have found.

Genesis chapter 18 and verse one, "And the LORD appeared to him," that is to Abraham, "in the plains of Mamore." The LORD did. Yahveh did, Jehovah did, (The word "LORD" is the Hebrew word 'YHVH' and can be translated as Yahveh, Yehovah, Jehovah). Now when you get to the book of John and we read Jesus' own words about how that "no man has seen God at any time nor heard his voice" (John 1:18, 5:37). John says that nobody has ever seen God.

Now we find Abraham, and it says, "The LORD appeared to Abraham," then what we're seeing here is something other than what you and I would have called God. We think of God as being the Father. Who is this that appeared to Abraham at this point in time? It is the God of Abraham. You have heard people talk about the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, who is that person?

Well it took somebody to introduce me to Him and make me realize that this God of Abraham was none other than Jesus Christ.

Let's continue in Genesis 18, verse 2, "Abraham lifted up his eyes and he saw three men that stood nearby. He ran out to meet them." Now this story is the story about what God did when He came down to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, but notice in verse 17, "And the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham, that thing which I do, {18} Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? {19} For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD and do justice and judgment, that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which He has spoken of him." {20} And the LORD said, "Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is very great, and because their sin is very grievous."

The LORD is speaking to Abraham. These are the words that God Himself, that Jesus Christ, who was God, said to Abraham, "Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and their sin is very grievous, {21} I am going down there now, to see if it's true, and if it is, I will know." {23} Abraham drew near, and said, "Will you destroy the righteous with the wicked," {24} "Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city, would you destroy it and not spare the place for that fifty righteous that are therein? This story is so familiar I won't go on.

Abraham steps up, not only is he able to see God, not only able to hear the LORD. He is able to bargain with the LORD, and they have a give-and-take discussion and the LORD changes what He was going to do because of all this with Abraham. Who is this? This is the one you and I have come to know as Jesus Christ, and none other.

The gentle shepherd, who was born in a manger, the little Jesus child, the gentle shepherd of the sheep. The one everyone paints, and they say, "who wouldn't harm a flea." The one who would not quench a smoking flax, was the one who destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah with fire and brimstone. None other.

You know, it is almost as though, the little hidden assumption lies under there, that the LORD of the Old Testament is harsh, and strict, and the Lord of the New Testament is gentle and kind. And you have one back here that wouldn't budge an inch and one over here who would give you anything and everything. One over here that is hard, and one over here that is gentle and kind. Not so, folks! It precisely the same mind, that you are dealing with in both Testaments. The one, that you and I, have come to know as Jesus Christ.

Melchizedek

Let's turn back a few more pages, there's a strange circumstance that takes place in Genesis chapter 14 verse 17, "The king of Sodom went out to meet Abraham after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer (Kedorlaomer), and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh."

This is before the destruction of Sodom. They had taken captives out of Sodom, including Lot and his family. Abraham, put all of his men together, went out, fought, rescued them, and took all the goods and booty of Sodom and Gomorrah and was bringing them back.

We are told in verse 17 that "The king of Sodom, came out to meet him, but another personage also came to meet him," a person that I believe would not be in Sodom. It says in verse 18, "Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine. He was the priest of the Most High God, {19} And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abraham of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth, {20} And blessed be the Most High God, which has delivered your enemies into your hand. And he (Abraham) gave him (Melchizedek) tithes of all."

This simple little instance is taking place here where Abraham is coming back from the slaughter with, who knows, perhaps a million dollars' worth of booty. And here comes a priest out to Abraham and he carves out 10% of it, even before he gives it back to the King of Sodom what was his. So Abraham gives 10% of all that to Melchizedek. This is a very significant act. Let's

turn back the Hebrews chapter 7, and I'll help you understand what's actually going down here and what we can learn.

Hebrews chapter 7 verse one, "This Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and he blessed him, {2} To whom Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is King of peace, {3} Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end-of-life, but made like the Son of God, abides a priest continually."

What kind of personage could this possibly be? What does it mean when you say that someone is without father, without mother, without descent? Some might argue that what this means is that there is no "genealogy for this man." This goes on to say, "He has not beginning of days, nor end-of-life." Now how many individuals, beings, could there possibly be in the universe, who have neither beginning of days, nor end-of-life? What's another word for someone who has no beginning of days, nor end-of-life? Eternal. Who is eternal? Well that's what the name YHVH, or Yahweh, or Jehovah means. It means "the eternal, ever living one." The one without beginning of days, nor end-of-life. This Melchizedek that came and met Abraham and accepted tithes from him, was God, was the eternal, was the YHVH, Yehovah. The one that we meet again and again throughout the pages of the Old Testament. The one whom we called God and who we may have assumed was the Father of Jesus Christ.

We are going to find out a few things more about this.

He said, "He is without father, without mother, He abides a priest perpetually, {4} Now consider how great this man was, unto even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils."

Now you have to realize that the tithe, and many people don't, really realize, that the tithe was an act of worship. It was something with one who is a lesser person did to one who was greater and acknowledging the greatness of this other person, the supremacy, or the power of the other. And so, Abraham, who was a Hebrew, is considered the greatest man in Hebrew history. He was the father of the faithful (Galatians 3:9).

He said, "I want you to understand, how great Melchizedek was because even Abraham paid tithes, acknowledging the greatness of this one Melchizedek." Who is this person?

He says, {5} "Verily they that are the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, even though they come out of the loins of Abraham. {6} But He whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham and blessed him that had the promises. {7} And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better."

Melchizedek blessed Abraham. Which was the greater? Which was the less? Abraham was the less.

Now He is writing to people who have a fixation on the Temple, and upon Levi, and who think that the Levitical priesthood was the pinnacle of the service of God.

Here he said, {8} "Men who die received tithes. There he received them, of whom it is witnessed he is alive. {9} And so I may say, Levi who receives tithes, paid tithes in Abraham, {10} For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchizedek met him."

He is establishing through this, the greatness of the Melchizedek priesthood, that it is greater than Abraham, and consequently it is greater than Levi, who was out of the loins of Abraham and would have to look up to and back to Abraham.

He then goes on to say, {11} "If then perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, what further need was there that another priest should arise after the order of Melchizedek, and not be called after the order of Aaron? {12} For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also in the law."

What law? Any law that had anything to do with the priesthood, including the law of tithing, which existed before Levi, existed after Levi, that Abraham paid tithes. Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek because Levi was in the loins of Abraham, figuratively speaking.

And so it is, that the one who receives tithes then, can receive tithes now. Who was that person? He is the one who is without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end-of-life, the one we know as Jesus Christ.

Verse 13, "For he of whom these things are spoken," to make the point as to who he is really talking about, "pertains to another tribe of which no man gave attendance at the altar. {14} For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood, {15} And yet he was established as a priest after the order of Melchizedek, and in fact, is none other than Melchizedek."

Jesus is the God of the Old Testament

The God, the LORD, the Jehovah, the Yahweh of the Old Testament is the one you and I know as Jesus Christ, as the Logos of God.

You know this has some far-reaching implications. There can be arguments made in theological constructions with all sorts of ideas, but there are some things that still come home, and they are truth and they do shake some of the old assumptions.

One, when a voice called out to Moses and called him up to Mount Sinai, whose voice was it? It was the one you and I know as Jesus Christ. When one spoke to him out of the burning Bush, and said, "Take off your shoes, the ground on which you stand is holy." Who was talking? The one you and I know as Jesus Christ. And when a fiery finger wrote the Ten Commandments on tables of stone, whose finger was it? It was the finger of Christ. The one you and I know as Jesus of Nazareth.

When the LORD began to pronounce laws and began to tell Israel, how to live their lives, who was it that was saying all of these things? It was the one you and I know as Jesus Christ. When the LORD told Israel, as a part of all the laws, these are the animals that you shall not eat? Who was that? It was Jesus Christ, that's who! It was the one we call the Son. It was Jesus. He is the one who gave all of the laws about slavery, He is the one who gave all of the laws regarding animal sacrifices, He's the one that told them where to keep the feasts, when to keep it, how to keep it, and what to do. He is the one who gave them all those laws about all of the Holy Days, and even all of those laws that we look back on and can't figure out why in the world God would ever want anyone to do those things. Those were all given by Jesus Christ.

That's Nasty

And when Jesus Christ said, "Look, these animals here are unclean, and these are an abomination." Who said that? Jesus did.

You know, little children, don't know what's clean. They will actually play in their own stool. They do not have any idea that there is anything wrong with it. As far as they can tell, that was moments ago, was a part of them. They will play in it and think nothing of it. Mother has to come along and say, "No, no, no, that's nasty." That is one of our favorite little words, nasty. Nasty is a nasty word, it sounds nasty, it feels nasty to say it, and it conveys nasty, it is filthy.

The word 'abomination' in Hebrew comes from the original word 'filth'. Once you read through Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 about clean and unclean meats, it is like God coming along and saying, "That's nasty." God is basically telling people, who wouldn't know the difference, of what is good and what is bad, what is clean and what is not clean, not only what was not only unclean, it was awful and filthy, it was nasty.

God had to tell them. Who was that? It was Jesus who told them.

Jesus Christ the Same Yesterday, Today and Forever

Now like I said, you can make a lot of arguments, theological discussions, until the cows come home, about what Jesus meant when He said certain things, whether He made meats clean or what have you, but you do need to keep in mind when you are doing all that, that He was the one that told them they were nasty in the first place. Jesus was the one.

Now, you are saying that, He's coming along, and He is going to tell them that things are not quite like He told you then. They are different, somehow. Think about that, when you are constructing the theological arguments that go around with things like clean and unclean meats and the Sabbath Day.

The one who originally rested on the first Sabbath Day, the seventh day of creation was none other than Jesus Christ. there are a couple of other things we might want to keep in mind.

James chapter 1 verse 17, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

"No variableness, neither shadow of turning." Just how much doing away with, casting aside, modifying, is God going to do anyway with the things He said. You have to ask questions because nobody seems to want to discuss what was abolished in the Old Testament. If it was abolished, why was it ever put in, in the first place? What's the point? What is the object? Where is it going? Turn back to chapter 13 of Hebrews, and verse seven, "Remember them which have the rule over you, which have spoken to you the word of God, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct," the goal, the purpose, where are they going.

Verse 8, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and forever."

Now I wonder how far back is yesterday supposed to go? Maybe He didn't mean the day before yesterday, maybe He just meant yesterday. Now you and I know that's not true, and when He makes the statement, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever."

Whatever it was that caused Jesus Christ to call Moses up to Mount Sinai, whatever it was that caused Him to chisel those ten words on those tables of stone, whatever it was in His mind, His consciousness, whatever purpose He had in establishing the laws regarding slavery and sacrifices and clean and unclean meats and the Holy Days, whatever it was, He has not changed.

Whenever you begin to put your theological constructions together, think about that. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever, as He continues, be not carried about with diverse and strange doctrines, and all sorts of new ideas, and new novelties.

Take a new look at that God of the Old Testament. Consider who He is, after all, and it will change the way you relate to the God of the Old Testament and the God of the New Testament.

The late Ronald L. Dart was a Christian evangelist whose teachings still inspire thousands of people around the world. His legacy spans decades. For more information about the teachings of Ronald L. Dart, visit RLDEA.com where you will find booklets, articles, sermons, Bible studies, and books by Mr. Dart.

Discussion Questions

1. Who do you think the God of the Old Testament was?
2. What led you to your idea?
3. Have you always believed that Jesus is probably the God of the Old Testament?
4. Is it hard to understand that Jesus preexisted before His human birth or is it easy for you to understand that idea?
5. Do you know of anyone that believes that Jesus didn't exist during the Old Testament?

6. What scriptures do they use to try to prove their assumption?
7. Do you like how Mr. Dart backs up his assumptions with the Bible?
8. Do you agree with Mr. Dart? Why or why not?
9. How would you explain the Father God?
10. If people realized that Jesus is actually the God of the Old Testament, would that change how they view the Law of God?