

SHOULD WE SAY ‘GOD IS A FAMILY’ OR ‘GOD THE FATHER HAS A FAMILY’?

The Worldwide Church of God (WCG) under Mr Herbert W Armstrong (HWA) taught that *God is a Family* which currently consists of God the Father and his Son Jesus. However, should man define what God is, such as a Unity, Binity, Trinity or Family, when the Bible does not use those terms? This article essays that the Bible reveals that God the Father *has* a Family rather than *God is* a Family. Like mainstream Christendom, the WCG taught that Jesus was the Creator and the LORD God of the OT. On page 7 of Lesson 17 of the 32-lesson Bible Correspondence Course the WCG taught that the OT LORD God was both the NT Jesus and Israel’s Husband. Therefore the WCG inferred first that God the Father remained an unmarried or single Father and second that He begot his Son Jesus through his Son’s Wife Israel by Mary. That inference means that God the Father committed both incest and adultery to beget his Son Jesus. The reader should review my page-12 article in the previous Issue 144 (May 31, 2011) of *The Journal* and my page-14 article in Issue 143 (Nov 2010 – Jan 2011) of *The Journal* to see that not Jesus but God the Father was the Creator, the LORD God of Abraham, the LORD God of Exodus and that God the Father remains to this day the Husband of Israel!

1. Introduction

A number of scriptures appear to declare there is only one God. For example, Deut 6:4 and Isaiah 45:5, “*I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me...*”. These scriptures have placed considerable obstacles in the way of understanding the Godhead.

Much of Christendom teaches a monotheist yet pluralist Trinity Godhead. This Godhead is monotheist because it is claimed to consist of a one-God substance and is pluralist because into this one-God substance are said to be subjoined the three God Persons of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Being monotheist the Trinity appears to fit monotheist scriptures like Deuteronomy 6:4 and Isaiah 45:5.

The WCG under HWA, by declaring that *God is a Family*, fell largely in line with mainstream Christendom’s teaching that the Godhead is both monotheist and pluralist. Instead of adopting a Trinity, the former WCG adopted a type of Binity which was called a Family and into which are subjoined at present God the Father and his Son Jesus. This was seen as also fitting monotheist scriptures like Deuteronomy 6:4 and Isaiah 45:5.

Since the 1986 death of HWA some from the former WCG have adopted Unitarianism (the One-God movement) which claims that only God the Father is God and that He created at some stage his Son Jesus as a special Being.

I reject Unitarianism because the Bible shows that Jesus was originally an independent self-existent God alongside the God who became his NT Father (see articles A4, A12 and A13). Also that Jesus surrendered his independent self-existent deity to become incarnate, die as man’s atoning Passover Lamb and become an obedient Son to his fellow God and Father. This allowed God the Father to create Adam and Eve.

2. The ancient Unitarian One-God error

Soon after the Apostolic church ended, Greek scholars began taking over in mainstream Christendom but they were influenced by their Greek neo-Platonist background. They could not accept that a God (Jesus) could have died and therefore they rejected that Jesus was a God. They also rejected that a spirit God (Father) would have soiled his hands creating the physical worlds and they concluded that God the Father had created Jesus, who in turn had created the physical worlds for his Father.

In mainstream Christendom this soon led to a monotheistic Unitarian Godhead in which only God the Father was God.

There came a reaction to this which portrayed the Godhead as

a monotheist pluralist one (Binity) into which are subjoined God the Father and his Son Jesus. This Godhead theory allowed Jesus to be retained in man’s imaginings as a God Being.

This Binity theory evolved over the next few centuries into mainstream Christendom’s Trinity, which portrays the Godhead as a single entity or substance into which are subjoined the three God persons of, Father, Son and an alleged third God the Holy Spirit.

The Trinity was finally adopted during the 4th century AD and is as incomprehensible a theory as mankind’s 20th-century Big-Bang theory that everything came from nothing. Man’s scholars tend to advance such weird theories when they are unable to explain what they can not understand. Let us remember that Truth can not spring from man’s mind.

The purpose of this article is to warn against adding to such theories by stating that *God is a Family* currently consisting of God the Father and his Son Jesus. That notion again portrays God as a type of monotheist pluralist Binity, called a Family into which it is claimed are subjoined God the Father and his Son Jesus. As with most human theories, it misses the point and ventures where we ought not to go.

3. Jesus’ original self-existent deity

A key to understanding that Jesus was originally a self-existing God is the passage Hebrews 6:20 – 7:4, as explained in my article A12. This article also appeared on page 25 of Issue 139 (June 17, 2010) of *The Journal*.

Christendom’s 2nd-century commitment to a monotheistic Godhead resulted in various falsifications of Greek manuscripts and also led to subsequent mistranslations in the KJV and other Bibles. This was done to reinforce the theory that Jesus was the Creator and the LORD God of the OT. My articles A4, A12 and A13 refute that theory by showing that the Bible teaches that our Lord Jesus too was originally an independent, self-existent eternally-existing God and that God the Father was the Creator, LORD God of the OT and Husband of Israel.

Section 4.1 of paper P2 shows that John 1:3 is badly mistranslated in most Bibles to make it appear in the passage John 1:1-3 that Jesus was the Creator. Instead verse 3 should be read in the sense that God the Father was able to create all things because Jesus had agreed to become and die as man’s Passover Lamb. Sections 3.0 and 5.0 of paper P2 cite many verses that show that not Jesus but God the Father was the Creator and God of the OT.

That God the Father created all things is plainly stated in Acts 4:24^b with 27^a. The intermediate verses 25 and 26 appear to have hidden this from Christendom's falsifiers.

Although the KJV declares in Ephesians 3:9 that Jesus was the Creator, more modern translations (e.g. NIV) reflect correctly Paul's original that God the Father was the Creator.

4. A difficult conundrum

Let us return to Isaiah 45:5, "I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me, I girded thee, though thou hast not known me;" Note in this verse God's singular self-reference through the singular pronouns "me" and "I". Clearly He sees himself as one God.

Section (7) "God and Elohim" of the page-14 article in Issue 143 (Nov 2010 – Jan 2011) of *The Journal* shows that throughout the OT the Hebrew noun "Elohim" when used in reference to the true God is always singular. This is also the case in Isaiah 45:5. As a result the noun "God" (Hebrew: Elohim Strong H430), refers in this verse to a single God Person and not to a pluralist Godhead.

Now for the conundrum.

If the WCG was correct that Jesus was the LORD God of the OT, then in Isaiah 45:5 Jesus denies God the Father's deity. Since this is absurd, we must question the teaching that Jesus was the OT LORD God.

If instead, as I claim, that God the Father was the LORD God of the OT, then it would seem that God the Father denied Jesus' deity.

So what are we to make of Isaiah 45:5? Are the Unitarians correct that only God the Father is God and Jesus was a special created Being? No they are not as shown in article A12, which appeared on page 25 of Issue 139 (June 17, 2010) of *The Journal*.

Other articles too (A4) show that Jesus had been originally an independent, self-existing God but who had agreed to surrender his independent self-existent deity to become and die as mankind's atoning Passover Lamb. With this Jesus became for the rest of eternity an obedient Son to his fellow God and now his Father (Phil 2:8).

Although Jesus surrendered his original independent self-existing deity to become incarnate, He retained his former God mind (see article A4 columns 2 and 3). Because Jesus had retained the mind of a God when incarnate, he could live without sin and received his Father's holy spirit only at his baptism aged 30 (Matt 3:16, Luke 3:23).

Because Jesus died and became for all future eternity an obedient Son to his former fellow God, He is no longer a truly independent self-existing God. Indeed with Jesus' death and resurrection, all life in the universe has come from God the Father, including all angelic, human, animal and plant life and the resurrected Jesus.

5. The conundrum answered

Trinitarians attempt to evade the conundrum of Isaiah 45:5 through claiming the Godhead is monotheist but also a plurality of three God Persons.

Many in the Church of God will similarly attempt to evade this conundrum by appealing to the Godhead being a monotheist pluralist Binity consisting of two God Persons, named a Family A little thought should convince the reader that this too doesn't answer the conundrum posed by Isaiah 45:5.

I believe the answer to this conundrum, that has troubled Christendom from the middle of the 2nd-century AD, is given in

the short article A13 at my Internet Home page and in particular under Section (9) of that article. That article also appeared on page 14 of Issue 143 (Nov 2010 – Jan 2011) of *The Journal* under the title, "How the OT Lord, LORD, God and GOD relate to God's name and his NT Identity".

Let us now consider the answer to the Isaiah 45:5 conundrum. Before God the Father could create carnal man and give man a free will, the God who became Jesus must have agreed to become incarnate and die as man's atoning Passover Lamb. Unless God the Father had that commitment from his fellow God and NT Jesus, He could not have created Adam and Eve with a free will.

When a God (Jesus) makes such a commitment, then from that moment this is a virtual fact. That is reflected in verses such as Isaiah 45:5, where the OT LORD God (Father) declared there is no God beside Himself. Jesus surrendering his original independent deity was already a virtual fact in Isaiah 45:5 and virtually only God the Father remained as the only true independent self-existent God.

However, there is another aspect to Isaiah 45:5, namely that God the Father was reminding his Wife, Israel, that she is subject to their Sinaitic marriage covenant and may relate only to her Husband and to no other god. The new covenant applies even today only to the true NT Church of God and not to carnal physical Israel.

The moment Jesus committed himself to the Plan of his fellow God and future Father, his status changed for ever from being an independent self-existing eternally-existing God to an obedient (future) Son to his fellow God and Father. Therefore the name *The Eternal* applies only to God the Father and not to his Son Jesus.

Therefore only God the Father remains as a true self-existing, ever-existing independent God and only God the Father could have named Himself "JHVH" from the Burning Bush to Moses and which means *The Eternal*.

The Hebrew name JHVH is usually rendered in English Bibles by the all-capitals forms "LORD" (Strong H3068) and "GOD" (Strong H3069) and which both mean *The Eternal*.

It should be stressed that the all-capitals form LORD (JHVH) does not mean Lord but rather *The Eternal* as explained in article A13.

That conundrum has snared the Unitarian One-God movement who believe that a created Jesus would be a sufficient sacrifice to atone for all sins of all humans that ever lived, when it is plain that no matter how good a created Being might be, He can never be the infinite sacrifice required for mankind's salvation.

6. Understanding Jesus' enormous sacrifice

We are all aware how greatly our Lord Jesus suffered physically through the scourging and the terrible execution of being nailed to a stake.

However, few are aware of the other aspects of his sacrifice. Namely his having surrendered for all future eternity his former independent self-existent eternal-existing deity and becoming for all future eternity an obedient Son to his former fellow God and now his Father.

Only because Jesus was prepared to make that sacrifice, could God the Father go ahead to create Adam and Eve and give all of us the breath of life.

The enormity of Jesus' sacrifice is least understood by the One-God movement and especially by those in that movement, who claim that Jesus was created at the time of his conception in Mary's womb and therefore allegedly had no prior existence.

For this last view consider the passage Hebrews 6:20 – 7:4, which reveals that the Melchizedek (Jesus), who met Abraham (Genesis 14:18, Psalm 110:4, John 8:56-58) had no beginning of days and therefore was not a created Being. Melchizedek was already priest to the Most High God in Abraham's day (Gen 14:18-19) and clearly is the NT Jesus.

The reasoning behind the One-God theory is as unsound and blasphemous as that which led to the Trinity, the Big Bang and Evolution.

7. *God the Father has a Family!*

I have shown in various papers and articles (A2-A3, A13) that not Jesus but God the Father was the Creator and Most High LORD God of Abraham, and of Exodus and who married the nation of Israel at Mt Sinai (Isa 54:5; Jer 3:14, 31:32).

Therefore God the Father is not a single Father but remains in an unbreakable marriage covenant relationship with his Wife Israel. This remains the case even though God the Father has ejected his Wife from their marital home, the Promised Land. Hosea chapter 2 shows that the LORD God, who is God the

Father, will resume his marriage with Israel once she comes to her senses. After all marriage remains an unbreakable covenant for life as explained in my paper A1.

Therefore *God the Father HAS a family* that currently comprises: God the Father, his Wife Israel and their Son Jesus. Mankind has the incredible potential to be born again from the grave as literal spirit children of God the Father into this Family. In this Age that potential is limited to the true Church of God.

It is for the reasons given in this article that I claim that we should say that *God the Father HAS a Family* rather than *God IS a Family*.

8. *Laodicea's Lamp*

Although I have questioned some of HWA's teachings, I acknowledge that he was God's messenger to the true Church of God in our day. Only not to Philadelphia as he claimed but to God's seventh and final lukewarm era of Laodicea (see paper P1, *Laodicea's Lamp!*)

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