

# Christ in the Law of Moses

## Introduction

**Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”** (John 1:45)<sup>1</sup>

**“Do not think that I [*Jesus*] will accuse you [*nonbelieving Jews*] before the Father; the one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope. For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me.”** (John 5:45-46)

**Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He [*Christ*] explained to them [*Cleopas and another disciple*] the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.** (Luke 24:27)

**Now He [*Christ*] said to them [*the eleven disciples and other disciples*], “These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” And He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.** (Luke 24:44-45)

In the first passage above, Philip, one of the twelve disciples, told a fellow Israelite that Jesus of Nazareth, of whom Moses through the Law and also the Prophets had written, had been found (John 1:35-51). A search of Scripture, however, will not find any references to the name *Jesus* in the Old Testament. Later, when Jesus had been speaking to a group of nonbelieving Jews, He said that Moses had written about Him (John 5:39-47). After His resurrection but before His ascension, Jesus appeared to His disciples and explained to them the prophecies concerning Himself from Moses, the Law of Moses, the Prophets, as well as the Psalms (Luke 24:13-49). *The Psalms* refers to the book of Psalms, but what is meant by *Moses*, *the Law*, and *the Prophets* as identified in these passages?

Depending on the scriptural context, references to Moses may be about the man, the Law, or the first five books of the Old Testament—Genesis through Deuteronomy. These five books do not mention an author but, traditionally, have been attributed to Moses. He could not have written the book of Deuteronomy, however, because it includes his death and is written from the perspective of someone who was already in the promised land (perhaps Joshua?), which Moses did not enter (Deuteronomy 1:1-5; 4:37-38; 34:1-8). Whether or not he personally wrote all or parts of them does not matter—they are the inspired word of God, they include what Moses did and said, and they include the first prophecies about Christ and the future promised land of Israel. Furthermore, because Jesus quoted from “the book of Moses” (Mark 12:26), I believe they are rightfully considered to be the books of Moses. Also, because Christ is referred to in veiled language in the book of Genesis (e.g., Genesis 1:26; 3:15; 5:29), I believe that the reference to Moses in Luke 24:27 by our resurrected Lord is referring to the first five books.

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<sup>1</sup> All references are quoted from the *New American Standard Bible (NASB Side-Column Reference Edition, Copyright © 1996 by The Lockman Foundation)*. Nonbolded words in brackets are either equivalent words from the *King James Version (KJV)* or, if in italics, were added by me for clarification.

**“In your [Abraham’s] seed [Christ] all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My [God’s] voice.”** (Genesis 22:18; see also Genesis 12:1-3; Galatians 3:16)

The Law refers to the covenant given by God to Israel through Moses as revealed and described in Exodus 19 through the book of Deuteronomy.<sup>2</sup> The Prophets, consisting of the books of Samuel and Isaiah through Malachi (Acts 3:24), contain prophecies about the future application and fulfillment of the Law of Moses as well as about Christ and the future kingdom of Israel. The book of Psalms, included in Luke 24:44, is also prophetic about these things because David, the primary author, was both a king and a prophet (Luke 20:41-44; Acts 2:29-36).

Please consider one more note regarding references to the Law in the New Testament. Nearly all references to the Law appear to be specific to the covenant God made with Israel through Moses. A few of the references to prophecies from the Law, however, were from the books of Psalms or the Prophets (e.g., John 12:34 refers back to Isaiah 9:7 and Ezekiel 37:25). In such instances, the use of the term *Law* appears to be a general reference that could include the Law of Moses as well as the books of Psalms and the Prophets. I believe this is because those books did not contradict anything in the Law of Moses (i.e., they did not add to or subtract from the Law—Deuteronomy 4:1-2; Matthew 5:17-18) but, instead, spoke of the future fulfillment of the Law.

**Jesus answered them [the Jews], “Has it not been written in your Law, ‘I said, you are gods’?”** (John 10:34; see also Psalm 82:6)

**“But they [nonbelieving Jews] have done this to fulfill the word that is written in their Law, ‘They hated Me without a cause.’”** (John 15:25; see also Psalm 69:4)

The accounts of Matthew through John contain numerous references to fulfilled prophecies regarding what our Lord Jesus Christ said and did as well as the people and events associated with His birth, ministry, death, and resurrection.<sup>3</sup> Such prophecies were all looking to *the last days*; that is, all of them were associated with the fulfillment of Israel’s promised kingdom with Christ as King of Israel and King of kings. Consequently, the prophesied last days began to be fulfilled with the conception and birth of Jesus (Hebrews 1:1-3; Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; I Peter 1:20).<sup>4</sup> In his address to the men of Israel (his fellow kinsmen or brethren—Acts 3:12) shortly after the recorded events of Pentecost, Peter said that Christ would return to establish the promised kingdom as prophesied if they repented and turned back to God.

**“And now, brethren, I [Peter] know that you acted in ignorance, just as your rulers did also. But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ [Messiah] would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. Therefore repent and return [to God], so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing [Israel’s prophesied restoration and redemption] may come from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time [since the world began]. Moses said, ‘The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren; to Him**

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<sup>2</sup> See my study **The Law of Moses** that describes the covenant between God and Israel and whether we are to obey it today.

<sup>3</sup> See my study **Our Lord Jesus Christ** that presents some of the Old Testament prophecies concerning Him.

<sup>4</sup> See my study **The Mystery (God’s Secret Plan)** that includes a discussion on the prophesied last days and the fulfillment of those prophecies.

**[Jesus—the Christ] you shall give heed to everything He says to you. And it will be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.’ And likewise, all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and his successors onward, also announced these days. It is you who are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your seed [Christ] all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’ For you [Israel] first, God raised up His Servant [Son Jesus] and sent Him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways.”** (Acts 3:17-26)

Perhaps fulfillment of prophecies by Isaiah and in the Psalms (by King David) are most well-known (e.g., Isaiah 7:14; 9:1, 6-7; 53:1-7, 10-12; Psalm 16:8-11; 78:1-2). But what about the Law of Moses? Where in the Law does it prophesy about Christ? Let us see what Scripture says.

## **Christ in the Law**

We know that Christ was spoken of in the Law of Moses because He said He was. Before I began this investigation, I was aware that Paul had mentioned that Christ was in the wilderness as I will address later (I Corinthians 10:1-4). Also, I thought that maybe it was Christ who was communicating to Moses, but I had never done a specific study about it; through the course of this study, I realized this was a good time to do so. Otherwise, I confess that I could not recall how Christ was spoken about in the Law. The quest began by reviewing fulfilled prophecies recorded in the books of Matthew through John and seeing which of those prophecies originated in the books of the Law. Pretty soon, one thing led to another.

I am certain that I will not address all the references to or about Christ in the Law, but I believe the following subjects represent at least some of the ways in which the Law spoke of Christ in veiled terms or as types. That is, they either prophesied of Christ or foreshadowed His future work. I encourage you to search the word of God for yourself, including the provided references, to see if these subjects are truly speaking of Christ and to discover other ways in which He was spoken of in the Law of Moses.

### **Jesus Called Out of Egypt**

**Now when they [the magi] had gone, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up! Take the Child [Jesus] and His mother [Mary] and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is going to search for the Child to destroy Him.” So Joseph got up and took the Child and His mother while it was still night, and left for Egypt. He remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called My Son.”** (Matthew 2:13-15)

When the magi (Gentile wise men, or possibly kings), asked of Judea’s King Herod as to the whereabouts of the newborn King of the Jews, Herod sought out his chief priests and scribes as to where the Christ (a prophesied ruler of Israel) was to be born. They correctly said that, according to prophecy (Micah 5:2-4), the ruler would be born in Bethlehem of the tribe of Judah (Matthew 2:1-6). However, they could not have known, nor anyone else for that matter, that Moses had prophesied that the young child would be taken to Egypt for safety.

**How fair are your tents, O Jacob, your dwellings, O Israel! Like valleys that stretch out, like gardens beside the river, like aloes planted by the Lord, like cedars beside the waters. Water will flow from**

his [*Israel's*] buckets, and his seed will be by many waters, and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted. God brings him [*Christ*] out of Egypt, he [*Christ*] is for him [*Israel*] like the horns of the wild ox. He [*Christ*] will devour the nations who are his adversaries, and will crush their bones in pieces, and shatter them with his arrows. He couches, he lies down as a lion, and as a lion, who dares rouse Him? Blessed is everyone who blesses you [*Israel*], and cursed is everyone who curses you.” (Numbers 24:5-9)

This prophecy was only partially fulfilled. Joseph and Mary left Egypt and returned to Judea with young Jesus after the death of King Herod as prophesied in the first part of Numbers 24:8 (Matthew 2:19-21), but the remainder of the prophecy described Christ’s future judgment of the Gentile nations during the time of great tribulation. This prophecy, therefore, described not only Israel’s future redemption after the rapture (Numbers 24:6-7) but also the time sometime after the judgment of Israel described in Deuteronomy 18:18-19. The judgment of the nations prophesied in Numbers 24:8-9, culminating in the battle of Armageddon, will also fulfill the last part of God’s covenant with Abraham where God promised to bless the nations that will bless the descendants of Abraham (the nation of Israel) and would curse the nations that will curse (rise up against) Israel (Genesis 12:1-3).

### Christ the Prophet

**“Moses said, ‘The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren; to Him you shall give heed to everything He says to you. And it will be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.’”** (Acts 3:22-23)

The above passage is from Peter’s discourse to the men of Israel after Pentecost. As already noted, the name *Jesus* does not occur in the Old Testament, nor does the name *Christ*; however, He is spoken of throughout the Old Testament in veiled terms. For example, we see in the New Testament that the people of Israel were looking forward to their national savior—their Messiah, which also means *the Christ*, or *the anointed* (John 1:41; Luke 1:67-75). The Messiah of Israel was prophesied as such by the prophet Daniel (Daniel 9:25-26) and referred to by other names (e.g., Psalm 2:1-3; Isaiah 9:6-7; Ezekiel 37:24-28).<sup>5</sup>

Perhaps the most definitive reference to Christ in the Law of Moses is found in the book of Deuteronomy where Moses spoke of a future prophet. How do we know that Moses was prophesying about Christ? Could Moses have been talking about any one of the prophets who would be sent by God after him?

**“The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me [*Moses*] from among you, from your countrymen [*a fellow Israelite*], you shall listen to him. This is according to all that you asked of the Lord your God in Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, let me not see this great fire anymore, or I will die.’ The Lord said to me, ‘They have spoken well. I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. It shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him.’”** (Deuteronomy 18:15-19)

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<sup>5</sup> See my study **Is Christ Our Messiah?** that investigates what *Messiah* means and the prophetic role of the Messiah for the nation of Israel.

In truth, all of the prophets sent by God to His people of Israel communicated the words that God, through the Holy Spirit, caused them to speak or write (II Peter 1:20-21; II Chronicles 20:14-17; Ezekiel 3:22-27). The common response by the people was not only to not heed their words as the words of God, but to persecute and kill them (Jeremiah 7:21-26; Acts 7:51-53). In the above passage, however, Moses was talking about one specific prophet—Christ. We know this because Peter said that Christ was the prophet that Moses had spoken about (Acts 3:17-26). In his defense before the religious leaders of Israel, the disciple Stephen also referred to Moses’ prophecy in Deuteronomy (Acts 7:37).

In what way was Christ a prophet? A prophet was someone sent by God to convey His word to His people. Moses was the first prophet of God. He was sent by God to convey His covenant (the Law) to the people of Israel (Exodus 19:3-9; Deuteronomy 18:15-18; 34:10-12)—the covenant they were to strictly abide by in the land that God was about to give them. We also know that God sent His Son to His people and that He conveyed God’s word to them (John 7:16; 8:26-29; 12:49-50; 14:10). I believe that it is because Moses was the first prophet, and with whom God directly communicated, that he prophesied of the future prophet—Christ—as one like himself. Therefore, Moses the prophet was a type of Christ the prophet.

Furthermore, prophets also spoke of future events—God used them to reveal His plan and purpose to His people. Much of what Jesus spoke about looked forward to Israel’s future kingdom that He would rule as the King of Israel as well as the King of kings and Lord of lords. Consider how often Jesus began a parable, all of which pertained to Israel’s promised future kingdom—a heavenly kingdom on earth (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:22-38; 37:15-28; Matthew 4:17, 23)—with words such as “The kingdom of heaven is like...” (Matthew 13:24, 31, 33, 44, 47; 20:1; 22:1).<sup>6</sup> He also spoke of persecution and judgments associated with the future time of great tribulation (Matthew 24:1-44).

We need to realize that this prophecy by Moses, as for the prophecy in Numbers 24, was only partially fulfilled. Christ did come to His own people of Israel but, instead of heeding His words as the word of God, they rejected Him and demanded His crucifixion (John 1:11; Matthew 27:22-25; Acts 2:23; 3:14-15). According to prophecy, He would destroy all those of His own people who did not heed His words (Deuteronomy 18:19; Acts 3:23). This has not occurred yet, and will not occur until after the rapture when Christ will judge and redeem His people of Israel before dealing with the Gentile nations (Zechariah 13:7-9; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:22-32).

## **Christ the Lamb of God**

**The next day he [John the Baptist] saw Jesus coming to him and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is He on behalf of whom I said, ‘After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.’” (John 1:29-30)**

In the above passage we have an account of the time that Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist (see also Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:31-34). John, a prophet of God (Matthew 11:7-11; Luke 1:76), recognized Jesus as the Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world.

The prophet Isaiah referred to Christ as a lamb when he prophesied of His future crucifixion (Isaiah 53:7-8; Acts 8:25-35). Peter also compared the sacrifice of Christ and redemption through His shed blood

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<sup>6</sup> Equivalent verses in the books of Mark and Luke call it “the kingdom of God” but, as in Matthew, are referring to the same heaven-like but earthly kingdom prophesied in Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

as to that of the sacrifice of an unblemished and spotless lamb (I Peter 1:17-19). Christ is referred to as *the Lamb* throughout the book of Revelation, including references to His crucifixion and to the shedding of His blood for redemption (Revelation 5:11-13; 7:14; 12:10-11; 13:8). Do these references remind us of anything from the Law of Moses?

When God gave His covenant to the people of Israel through His prophet Moses, they were promised to be a kingdom of priests if they fully obeyed it (Exodus 19:5-6). The only way to completely obey the Law of Moses was to be perfect—sinless. God knew His people could not keep it because they had a sin nature, so He provided a means to cover their sin. He required the shedding of blood—through animal sacrifices—to atone (compensate for the just penalty) for their sins.

Although burnt offerings to God were required before the Law was instituted, as an expression of thanksgiving and worship (Genesis 4:4; 8:20; 22:1-8), it was not until the Law that sacrifices were specified for the atonement or forgiveness of sins (Exodus 29:10-14; Leviticus 1:1-17). The book of Leviticus describes the exact sacrificial requirements for various types of sin (and whether committed intentionally or unintentionally) and for different social standings of the people, such as for priests, leaders, the nation of Israel as a whole, and common individuals. The types of animals required included bulls, goats, lambs (of either sheep or goats), and pigeons or doves (Leviticus Chapters 4 – 6). But why was Christ referred to as the Lamb of God? Please consider the following brief (and likely incomplete) explanation as I understand it regarding the Law of Moses.

David knew, at least to some extent, that although the sacrifice of bulls and goats was required by God to cover sin, those sacrifices did not actually take away a person's sins (Psalm 40:6-8). We find out later that it was the shed blood of Christ that actually paid God's required price for sin (Romans 3:21-26; Hebrews 9:11-14; 10:1-18). Under the Law, the sacrifices were figuratively a fragrant or soothing aroma to God—they were accepted by Him (Leviticus 4:27-31). So, too, was Christ's sacrifice for us to God.

**Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.** (Ephesians 5:1-2)

Although there were several different animals required for different burnt offerings and sacrifices, there seems to be a certain significance about a lamb. In the garden of Eden, Abel's offering of the firstling of his flock (a lamb) was regarded by God as acceptable (Genesis 4:4). When God was preparing to take Israel out of Egypt, He required that each Israelite household kill a lamb (an unblemished one-year-old male from a sheep or a goat) and put some of its blood on the doorposts and lintel of their houses. The houses of those who obeyed God's instructions were passed over by God's destroyer who would kill the firstborn (human and beast) in all the land of Egypt (Exodus 12:1-13, 23).

In the Law of Moses, the sacrifice of one or more lambs was required for several different offerings, including the following:

- A one-year-old lamb twice daily for the consecration of the tent of meeting and of the chief priest Aaron and his sons (Exodus 29:38-46; see also Numbers 28:1-8).
- A male or female lamb without defect as a peace offering to the Lord by an owner of a flock (Leviticus 3:6-11).

- A female lamb without defect as a sin offering by a common individual—a person of the land—for forgiveness who sinned unintentionally but whose sin was made known to him (Leviticus 4:27-35).
- A one-year-old lamb and calf without defect as a burnt offering by Aaron and his sons (as well as other specified animals for sin and peace offerings) for the atonement of themselves and for the people of Israel (Leviticus 9:1-7).
- Two male lambs and a female lamb, without defect, for the cleansing of a leprous person (Leviticus 14:1-32).
- A one-year-old male lamb without defect as part of the wave offering associated with the harvest (Leviticus 23:10-12).
- Two one-year-old male lambs without defect as a burnt offering for every sabbath (Numbers 28:9-10).

These offerings and sacrifices foreshadowed the perfect sacrifice of Christ—the Lamb of God—who was without defect (He was sinless—I Peter 1:17-19).<sup>7</sup> They also foreshadowed the time when God will cleanse Israel—when there will no longer be sin or sickness—through the new covenant of Christ’s shed blood (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:22-28; Luke 22:20; Hebrews 8:7-13; 9:15). With the setting aside of the Law of Moses in this dispensation of grace (Colossians 2:13-14; Romans 6:14; 7:4-6; 8:1-4; Galatians 3:10-14), sacrifices and burnt offerings are no longer required by God.

### Christ the High Priest

**Therefore, He [Christ] had to be made like His brethren [the people of Israel] in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.** (Hebrews 2:17)

**Therefore, holy brethren [Jewish believers], partakers of a heavenly calling, consider [Christ] Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession; He was faithful to Him [God] who appointed Him, as Moses also was in all His [God’s] house.** (Hebrews 3:1-2)

**Therefore, since we [Jewish believers] have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.** (Hebrews 4:14-15)

In the book of Hebrews, written to the believing Jews who were looking forward to their kingdom promised throughout the Law and the Prophets (Hebrews 1:1-2; Acts 1:6; 3:17-26), Christ is described as their High Priest. Aaron, the brother of Moses, was a Levite and was the first *chief priest* of Israel (Exodus 4:14; Ezra 7:5), a position later referred to as *high priest* (Numbers 35:25-28). All subsequent high priests were to be descendants of Aaron and his sons (Exodus 29:9; 40:12-15; Numbers 18:1-7). Additionally, all other priests were to be members of the tribe of Levi (Numbers 3:5-10; 18:6).

**“Then bring near to yourself [Moses] Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the sons of Israel, to minister as priest to Me—Aaron, Nahab and Abihu, Elazar and Ithamar, Aaron’s**

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<sup>7</sup> Paul later revealed that Christ actually *became* sin on our behalf (II Corinthians 5:21), which is a detail that had not been prophesied or revealed prior to that time.

**sons. You shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty. You shall speak to all the skillful persons whom I have endowed with the spirit of wisdom, that they make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister as priest to Me [the Lord—Exodus 25:1].” (Exodus 28:1-3)**

Roles of the high priest included being the mediator between God and the people of Israel, and making atonement for the sins of the people in accordance with the Law of Moses (Leviticus 9:1-7; 16:29-34). It is in these things that Aaron was a type of Christ, the High Priest.

**For every high priest taken from among men is appointed [by God] on behalf of men in things pertaining to God, in order to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; he can deal gently with the ignorant and misguided, since he himself also is beset with weakness; and because of it he is obligated to offer sacrifices for sins, as for the people, so also for himself. And no one takes the honor to himself, but receives it when he is called by God, even as Aaron was. So also Christ did not glorify Himself so as to become a high priest, but He [God the Father] who said to Him, “You are My Son, today I have begotten You”; just as He says also in another passage, “You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.” (Hebrews 5:1-6)**

When God gave His Law to the people of Israel through His prophet Moses, He promised that Israel would be a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:5-6; see also Isaiah 61:1-6). This has not occurred yet, but will happen when God restores and cleanses (redeems) the nation of Israel.<sup>8</sup> He will sprinkle (baptize) them with clean water and write His Law on their hearts, thus forgiving them and making them sinless (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:22-28). In accordance with the Law of Moses, all priests of Israel had to be figuratively cleansed of their sins by washing of water (a form of baptism) before they could approach God (Exodus 29:1-4; 30:17-21; 40:12). In the future, the believing remnant of Israel will be cleansed and will be a kingdom of priests (I Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 1:6), and Christ the High Priest will be their mediator through the new covenant (Hebrews 8:1-13; 9:11-15) and also their King (Matthew 27:11; John 1:49; Revelation 17:14).

But who is Melchizedek, the one spoken of in Hebrews 5:6? Melchizedek (meaning *righteousness*) was the King of Salem (meaning *peace*) and also a priest of the Most High God (or, God Most High—Genesis 14:18-20; Hebrews 7:1-2). This was in the time of Abraham (then known as Abram), who was blessed by Melchizedek, and before God had created His nation through Abraham's grandson Jacob (a.k.a. Israel—Genesis 35:9-12) and delivered His Law through Moses. Christ, also, will judge with righteousness and be a king of peace (Psalm 96:13; Isaiah 9:6; 11:4-5; Revelation 19:11). Melchizedek, therefore, was also a type of Christ but not in the same sense that Aaron was.

Because he predated the nation of Israel, Melchizedek was not a Levite and was not a high priest (or chief priest) because that designation was instituted through the Law of Moses. What we know about Melchizedek is explained in Chapter 7 of the book of Hebrews. Melchizedek had no genealogy nor beginning of days or end of life. By an unexplained miracle of God, he was made like the Son of God and remains a priest perpetually (Hebrews 7:3-6).<sup>9</sup> Christ, who was not a Levite and, therefore, not of the

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<sup>8</sup> See my studies **The Mystery (God's Secret Plan)** and **The Law of Moses** that describe these promises and their future fulfillment.

<sup>9</sup> Did Christ appear to Abram in the form of the man Melchizedek? Or, was Melchizedek an angel of God who lived as a man (Hebrews 13:2)? Scripture does not provide this information about him, so we do not know for sure.



order of Aaron, was designated by God as the High Priest of Israel according to the order of the priest Melchizedek (Hebrews 7:1-22).

### **Christ the Mediator**

**For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time.** (I Timothy 2:5-6)

**Why the Law [of Moses] then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator [Moses], until the seed [Christ] would come to whom the promise had been made.** (Galatians 3:19)

In our natural unsaved condition in which we are unrighteous and dead in sin, there is a gulf between us (mankind) and God—we are enemies of God (Ephesians 2:1-3). Because of what Christ did on the cross for us, however—His death for our sins, burial, and resurrection—those who believe what He did are no longer God’s enemies (Romans 5:6-11). We are at peace with God and He considers us to be His adopted children (Romans 5:1-2; 8:14-17; Ephesians 1:3-7). Therefore, Christ became the mediator between us and God.

Moses was a mediator, also. He was God’s chosen instrument to mediate between Israel—the chosen nation of God—and God Himself (Exodus 3:1-15; 24:1-8). To bridge the gap between their sin and God’s righteousness, God gave His Law to the nation through Moses (Exodus 19:1-9). Additionally, we have several accounts in Scripture where Moses begged God for mercy on the behalf of the people when they sinned against God (Numbers 16:20-22; 21:6-7; Deuteronomy 9:12-29)—he advocated for them. Moses, therefore, was a type of Christ because our Lord intercedes for us (Romans 8:33-34; Hebrews 7:25). As such, Moses and the Law prophetically spoke of Christ.

### **Christ the Righteousness of the Law**

**He [God] made Him [Christ] who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.** (II Corinthians 5:21)

**Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For what the Law [of Moses] could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, so that the requirement [righteousness] of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.** (Romans 8:1-4)

The Law of Moses was perfect and righteous (Romans 7:12). If the people of Israel had obeyed all of God’s commandments, ordinances, and statutes contained in the Law of Moses, then it would have been righteousness for them (Deuteronomy 6:25). However, the Israelites tried to attain their own righteousness through works apart from faith and continually rebelled against God (Romans 9:30-33; Ezekiel 2:1-5). They, like all of mankind, had a sinful nature and could not obtain the righteousness of the Law through their works. It was not until much later that God revealed His hidden, eternal purpose for giving the Law.

We find out through the Apostle Paul that the Law was given to show that everyone sins and that it is impossible to earn righteousness (Romans 3:23; 5:20-21; Galatians 3:19-25)—it actually condemned

us to spiritual death because of our sin (Romans 3:19-20; 7:7-13; II Corinthians 3:4-6; Galatians 3:10-14). It was also given to set the stage for God's eternal purpose to demonstrate to us that Christ paid the price for our sins through His death on the cross—He was the perfect sacrifice required by God (Ephesians 5:1-2; Hebrews 7:26-28; 10:10-14).

**Now we know that whatever the Law [of Moses] says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed [silenced] and all the world may become accountable to God; because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin. But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation [atoning sacrifice] in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. For we maintain [conclude] that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law. (Romans 3:19-28)**

Furthermore, we obtain justification and righteousness (by the working of God) through belief in Christ's work at the cross for us—that He died for our sins, was buried, and was raised up from the dead (Ephesians 1:3-8; Romans 5:6-11; 8:1-4). God considers us to be righteous, therefore, by faith apart from works of the Law or any other works that we might consider to be satisfactory to God. Unfortunately, like the Galatian brethren, believers today still try to become righteous or prove their righteousness through doing works of the Law (Galatians 3:1-5). Do you believe that Christ died for your sins?

**Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. But to the one who does not work [for righteousness], but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited [accounted] as righteousness. (Romans 4:4-5)**

**Now I [Paul] make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. 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. (I Corinthians 15:1-4)**

**For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)**

### **Whose Voice Did Moses Hear?**

I do not know this for certain, but I believe that Christ was also spoken of in the Law of Moses by *perhaps* being the one who was speaking to Moses. We have references in the Law that Moses was spoken to by *God* (Exodus 20:1-2) and the people were spoken to, through Moses, by *the Lord our God* or *the Lord your God* (Deuteronomy 1:6; 5:6; 10:9). But in nearly all instances in which God was speaking to Moses, however, He was referred to as *the Lord* (e.g., Exodus 19:3-6; 25:1; Leviticus 1:1; Numbers 1:1;

Deuteronomy 2:1-2). Was it God the Father speaking to Moses, or was it God the Son or the Holy Spirit? Or, was it an angel speaking in his own voice for God?

Perhaps we cannot know the answer, and perhaps it does not matter if we do or do not understand because we must remember that God's ways are beyond our understanding (Isaiah 55:8-9; I Corinthians 1:26-31). However, please consider the following presentation; I am always humbled by what I do, and do not, understand concerning the things of God.<sup>10</sup>

**Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him [God] be the glory forever. Amen. (Romans 11:33-36)**

## **The Godhead**

Please bear with me for a moment as I go into some background explanation about God that I hope will help lead us to understand the work of Christ as revealed in the Law of Moses. I freely admit that my understanding of God is limited by my own humanity (including my sin nature), but I will try to explain God as I understand Scripture explains Him.

**“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19-20)**

In our Lord's instructions to His disciples prior to His ascension, He commanded them to baptize those who repented of their sins and believed the gospel of the imminence of Israel's long-promised kingdom (Mark 1:4; 16:14-16; Matthew 4:17, 23; 10:7; Luke 24:45-47; Acts 1:6; 2:37-38) in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Please note that He did not say to do so in their *names*. The word *trinity* does not occur in Scripture, but it aptly describes the three persons or entities of one God as revealed in this passage. The Apostle Paul also described our one God as three persons in his letter to the Ephesian believers.

**There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling [salvation]; one Lord [Jesus Christ], one faith, one baptism,<sup>11</sup> one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in [you] all. (Ephesians 4:4-6)**

It is generally acknowledged within Christianity, at least superficially, that Jesus was not only the Son of God but God in the flesh—He was and is God. Frankly, this is a difficult concept to comprehend, but it is absolutely true and I know it is true by faith. Please consider the following verses and passages.

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<sup>10</sup> I have heard or read too many times over the years that “the Bible clearly says” such and such by pastors, Bible teachers, or authors when they are explaining a doctrinal point, when oftentimes their point is not necessarily supported by the verses they are using, or is indeed contrary to Scripture. We are exhorted to accurately handle, or rightly divide, the word of truth (II Timothy 2:15; see also Acts 17:10-11), and our understanding of the word of God is dependent on what He opens our eyes to understand (Luke 24:44-45; Ephesians 1:15-21; I Corinthians 2:6-13; Acts 16:14). Brethren, we need to be humble in our use of God's word.

<sup>11</sup> See my study **Should We Be Baptized?** that discusses the *one baptism* that applies to us today.

**In the beginning was the Word [*Jesus Christ*], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come in being. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. (John 1:1-5)**

**He [*Christ*] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him [*Christ*] all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through [by] Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fulness to dwell in Him [*Christ*], and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself [*God the Father*], having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven. (Colossians 1:15-20)**

**For in Him [*Christ*] all the fullness of Deity [the Godhead] dwells in bodily form. (Colossians 2:9)**

The Godhead does exist in three persons, and each *person* has a specific role. As difficult as this may be to comprehend, I believe that God, through Christ, created nature to represent this situation (Colossians 1:16). For example, all elements have three phases: solid, liquid, and gas. A water molecule is a common example of a chemical compound of elements (two hydrogen and one oxygen) that, depending on temperature and pressure, can either be in the form of a solid (ice), liquid (water), or gas (invisible vapor). In fact, the elements of hydrogen and oxygen each have three phases. Even gold *perishes* (though not literally) in its gaseous phase (see I Peter 1:7).

There is a hierarchy in the three persons of God, which is God the Father, then God the Son, then God the Holy Spirit, as alluded to in Matthew 28:19-20. God the Father is the Almighty, sovereign God of all creation—the universe<sup>12</sup>—who dwells in the heavens in unapproachable light and is One who no man has seen or heard (I Timothy 1:17; Colossians 1:15; John 5:37). We are to worship God the Father, and not the Son or the Holy Spirit.<sup>13</sup> We are able to worship the Father through the Son, who is the image of God and who is our mediator between us and the Father (I Timothy 2:5-6).

**I [*Paul*] charge you [*Timothy*] in the presence of God [*the Father*], who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep the commandment<sup>14</sup> without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ [*the rapture—I Thessalonians 4:13-17*], which He [*God*] will bring about at the proper time—He [*God*] who is the blessed and only Sovereign [Potentate], the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him [*God*] be honor and eternal dominion! Amen. (I Timothy 6:13-16)<sup>15</sup>**

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<sup>12</sup> Unfortunately, it has *always* been the nature of mankind to worship created things instead of the Creator (Romans 1:18-32). How often do we hear someone attributing something—good or bad—to *the universe*?

<sup>13</sup> See my study **Who Do We Worship?** that discusses the Godhead in greater depth and demonstrates that we are to worship God the Father.

<sup>14</sup> The commandment that Paul gave to Timothy was to fight the good fight of faith (I Timothy 1:18-19; 6:11-12).

<sup>15</sup> Although usually taught otherwise, the subject of I Timothy 6:13-16 is not Jesus Christ but God the Father who dwells in unapproachable light and is invisible (Colossians 1:15); therefore, it was not God the Father who dwelled

**For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, yet for us [*believers—children of God*] there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him. (I Corinthians 8:5-6)**

The work of the Spirit of God is revealed throughout Scripture, including in the Law of Moses (Exodus 31:1-5; Numbers 11:16-17). Like God the Son, He has worked in different roles as God has dealt with us and unfolded His eternal plan. For example, John the Baptist prophesied that Christ would baptize His disciples with the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11), which first began at Pentecost (Acts 1:4-5; 2:1-4). That is, the Holy Spirit would come upon them in power, He would be a helper to them, and they would receive the ability—supernatural gifts—to perform miraculous things (John 14:12-17, 26; Mark 16:17-18; Acts 2:43).<sup>16</sup> Later, through the Apostle Paul, we learn that the Holy Spirit baptizes us into the body of Christ and eternally seals our salvation (I Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 1:13-14). Brethren, this is a significant change that is often overlooked: in the first instance, Christ is the baptizer, whereas in the second instance (that still applies today) the Holy Spirit is the baptizer. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit is a mediator who intercedes for believers today according to the will of God (Romans 8:26-27).

Because God is three persons, it may not always be obvious who is speaking when Scripture says that *God, the Lord God, or the Lord* said something to someone. So, who spoke to Moses and others as recorded in the Bible, and how was it accomplished? As these questions are explored, the referenced Scripture verses and passages will reveal more about the Godhead and the deity of Christ our Lord.

## **God Communicated Through Angels**

### ***The Burning Bush***

In the account of the burning bush that was not consumed by the fire, we see that God spoke to Moses about His plan to use Moses to deliver the people of Israel from bondage in Egypt (Exodus 3:1-10). But was it God who was directly speaking to Moses? As described in Exodus 3:2, it was an angel of the Lord who appeared to Moses in the bush. Consequently, it appears that the angel was the one speaking to Moses and was speaking for God (Acts 7:35).

**“After forty years had passed, an angel [of the Lord] appeared to him [*Moses*] in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in the flame of a burning thorn bush. When Moses saw it, he marveled at the sight; and as he approached to look more closely, there came the voice of the Lord: ‘I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob.’ Moses shook with fear and would not venture to look. But the Lord said to him, ‘Take off the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground. I have certainly seen the oppression of My people in Egypt and have heard their groans, and I have come down to rescue them; come now, and I will send you to Egypt.’ This Moses whom they [*the people of Israel*] disowned, saying, ‘Who made you a ruler and**

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in the sanctuary of the tabernacle. Jesus Christ will be King of kings and Lord of lords when His kingdom is established (Revelation 19:16; 21:22-27), whereas God the Father has always been King and Lord over all (I Timothy 1:17; Deuteronomy 10:17; Psalm 95:3; 103:19; 145:1; Proverbs 21:1; Daniel 4:37).

<sup>16</sup> In this dispensation of the grace of God, we do not receive the miraculous, or sign, gifts that the disciples received at Pentecost and for a short time thereafter (I Corinthians 13:8-10). This is explained in my studies **The Mystery (God’s Secret Plan), The Two Messages of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and Should We Be Baptized?**

**a judge?’ is the one whom God sent to be both a ruler and a deliverer with the help of the angel who appeared to him in the thorn bush.” (Acts 7:30-35)**

If it was an angel speaking for God, in whose voice was he speaking? His own or that of God? These accounts say that God (the Lord) was talking directly with Moses and that he was afraid to look at God (Exodus 3:4-6; Acts 7:31-33), so it would seem that Moses was hearing the voice of God. However, we see in John 5:37 that no one has heard the voice of God.

**“And [God] the Father who sent Me [Jesus], He has testified of Me. You [nonbelieving Jews] have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form.” (John 5:37)**

I do not believe that this verse meant that only those specific Jews had not heard God’s voice. In the context of this passage, Jesus was proving to the nonbelieving Jews that He was indeed the Son of God, that God was testifying that He was His Son, and that everything Jesus did was in accordance with the will of God who sent Him (John 5:18-47). In this specific verse, I am convinced that Jesus was saying that no one other than Himself had heard the voice of God and seen His form<sup>17</sup> as further proof of who He was (and is). So, whose voice was Moses hearing?

### ***Moses on Mount Sinai***

God met with Moses on Mount Sinai to speak to Moses, to introduce Himself to the people of Israel, and to give them His commandments and ordinances (later known as the Law of Moses) through Moses (Exodus 19:1-13). God announced His presence through thunder (sounds that were like thunder but not due to the lightning), lightning (not from a natural storm), and the sound of a trumpet (Exodus 19:16-17).

**Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons [children] of Israel: ‘You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings, and brought you to Myself. Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant [the Law], then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words that you shall speak to the sons [children] of Israel.” (Exodus 19:3-6)**

**Now Mount Sinai was all in smoke because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently. When the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Mose spoke and God answered him with thunder [by a voice].<sup>18</sup> The Lord came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain; and the Lord called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up. Then the Lord spoke to Moses, “Go down, warn the people, so that they do not break through to the Lord to gaze, and many of them perish. Also let the priests who come near to the Lord consecrate [sanctify] themselves, or else the Lord**

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<sup>17</sup> No person has seen God because He is invisible and dwells in unapproachable light (Colossians 1:15; I Timothy 6:13-16).

<sup>18</sup> The NASB says that God answered Moses *with thunder*, whereas the KJV says He answered *by a voice*. I believe that the NASB is a correct rendering of the Hebrew word *kōhl* (or *qōwl*) for this verse because, although *kōhl* is usually translated as *voice*, it is also translated as *thunder*, *thunders*, and *thunderings* (Exodus 9:23, 28-29, 33-34; 19:16; 20:18), and as *the voice* and *the noise* (or *sound*) of the trumpet (Exodus 19:16; 20:18) in the KJV. We do not read of God’s spoken words to Moses until Moses reached the top of the mountain (Exodus 19:20-21).

**will break out against them.” Moses said to the Lord, “The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai, for You warned us saying, ‘Set bounds about the mountain and consecrate it.’” Then the Lord said to him, “Go down and come up again, you and Aaron with you; but do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the Lord, or He will break forth upon them.” So Moses went down to the people and told them. (Exodus 19:18-25)**

These passages in Exodus 19, as well as the passage in Exodus 20 where the Ten Commandments are spoken to Moses (Exodus 20:1-17), repeatedly say that God or the Lord was speaking to Moses (Exodus 19:3, 9-10, 21, 24; 20:1). The people were not hearing the voice of God when He was talking to Moses; instead, they perceived the thunder, lightning, and the sound of the trumpet—they knew when God was speaking to Moses (Exodus 19:9; 20:18-21).

Was it actually God the Father who was speaking to Moses? Did not God tell Moses that the people were to obey “My voice” (Exodus 19:5)? It is interesting that *the Lord* spoke of *the Lord* in the third person regarding His judgment against the people if they approached God on the mountain (Exodus 19:21-24). The term *the Lord*, therefore, appears to be referring to two different Lords. This dilemma is partially answered much later by the disciple Stephen during his defense before the religious leaders of Israel. In recalling these events of Moses, Stephen, under the control of the Holy Spirit (Acts 6:8-15; 7:54-56), said that it was an angel who was speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai. As occurred at the time of the burning bush, it appears that it was the angel of the Lord who was speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai. Again, however, whose voice was Moses actually hearing—the voice of the angel, the voice of God, or possibly another voice? I believe we can rule out the voice of God the Father based on John 5:37.

**“This is the one [Moses] who was in the congregation [church] in the wilderness together with the angel who was speaking to him on Mount Sinai, and who was with our fathers; and he received living oracles to pass on to you.” (Acts 7:38)**

### ***The Book of Revelation***

The book of Revelation is not directly tied to the Law of Moses, but it does expand upon the prophecies about the fulfillment of God’s promises regarding Israel’s future kingdom that was first prophesied in veiled terms in the first five books of the Bible (i.e., the books of Moses, including the Law—Genesis 12:1-3; 22:18; Exodus 19:5-6; Deuteronomy 28:9). Therefore, I believe that it is relevant to see how God communicated with the Apostle John.

**The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him [Christ] to show His [God’s] bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He [God] sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John, who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. (Revelation 1:1-2)**

As I understand the introduction of the book of Revelation, Christ did not speak the words of God directly to John but through God’s angel. That is, God used His angel to communicate with John just as He did with Moses. It appears to me, however, that John was hearing the voice of Christ and not the voice of the angel. As part of this revelation, John saw many visions of the things that were to happen (all of which are yet to happen) regarding the prophesied last days. In those visions John not only *saw* Christ but *felt* Him put His hand on him.

**When I saw Him [Christ], I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades." (Revelation 1:17-18)**

**"I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star." (Revelation 22:16)**

### ***Angels Speaking as Angels***

Did God (or the Lord) always speak through angels as demonstrated above? Apparently not, because there are instances in Scripture where an angel communicated or conveyed a message of God to a specific person in such a way that he was not speaking as God. That is, the angel was speaking as himself either directly (in person) or through a dream or vision. Please consider the following examples:

- The angel of the Lord became visible to Balaam and talked to him when he was frustrated with the actions of his donkey; God had enabled the donkey to see the angel before Balaam could (Numbers 22:22-35).

**The angel of the Lord said to him [Balaam], "Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Behold, I have come out as an adversary, because your way was contrary to me. But the donkey saw me and turned aside from me these three times. If she had not turned aside from me, I would surely have killed you just now, and let her live." (Numbers 22:32-33)**

- The angel of the Lord appeared as a man to the wife of Manoah (Judges 13:6), telling her that she would bear a son (Samson) who would deliver Israel from the Philistines.

**Then the angel of the Lord appeared to the woman and said to her, "Behold now, you are barren and have borne no children, but you shall conceive and give birth to a son. Now therefore, be careful not to drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing. For behold, you shall conceive and give birth to a son, and no razor shall come upon his head, for the boy shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel from the hands of the Philistines." (Judges 13:3-5; see also Judges 13:6-25)**

- The angel of the Lord spoke to Joseph in a dream regarding Mary and her pregnancy (Matthew 1:18-25; see also Matthew 2:13, 19).

**But when he [Joseph] considered this, behold, an [the] angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people [Israel] from their sins." (Matthew 1:20-21)**

- When Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph (Matthew 27:55-56) saw that the tomb of Jesus was empty, the angel of the Lord appeared to them and spoke to them (Matthew 28:1-7).

**The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying. Go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead; and behold, He is going ahead of you into Galilee, there you will see Him; behold, I have told you." (Matthew 28:5-7)**



- After the angel of God spoke as Christ to John, the book of Revelation closes with the angel speaking as himself.

**I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things. But he said to me, “Do not do that. I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book. Worship God.”** (Revelation 22:8-9; see also Revelation 19:10)

## The Baptism of Jesus

The baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist is recorded in Matthew 3:13-17, Mark 1:9-11, Luke 3:21-22, and John 1:29-34. All four accounts describe the Holy Spirit descending out of heaven and alighting on Jesus like a dove. The accounts in Matthew, Mark, and Luke also say that a voice came out of the heavens declaring Jesus to be the Son of God.

**After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened [unto him—*Jesus*], and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.”** (Matthew 3:16-17)

**Immediately coming up out of the water, He [*Jesus*] saw the heavens opening, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him; and a voice came out of the heavens: “You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased.”** (Mark 1:10-11)

**Now when all the people were baptized, Jesus was also baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, “You are my beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased.”** (Luke 3:21-22)

The account in the book of John is the only account that describes the event in the words of John the Baptist. It is different, and I believe that the difference is significant.

**“I [*John the Baptist*] did not recognize Him [*Jesus*], but so that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water.” John [*the Baptist*] testified saying, “I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him. I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, ‘He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.’<sup>19</sup> I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God.”** (John 1:31-34)

In his eye-witness account, John the Baptist described seeing the Holy Spirit descend onto Jesus and that this was the confirmation that Jesus was the Son of God. John the Baptist made no mention of hearing a voice from heaven, however. It seems certain that hearing the declaration from God that Jesus was His Son would have been sufficient confirmation of who Jesus was. I believe that John the Baptist

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<sup>19</sup> We do not have a record in Scripture of God telling John the Baptist to baptize with water or that he would know who Jesus was when he saw the Holy Spirit descend upon Him. It is possible that John the Baptist received this information from God through an angel, perhaps in the same manner that an angel revealed to Joseph that Mary would bear the Child Jesus (Matthew 1:20-21).

did not mention it because he did not hear it—it was a communication only between God the Father and God the Son.

In none of the other accounts of the baptism of Jesus does it say that anyone other than Jesus heard the declaration from heaven. When God was speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, the people only heard thunder and the sound of a trumpet—they did not hear a voice (Exodus 20:19). In this instance, there is no mention of people hearing any kind of sound. I believe this was an occasion where God the Father was speaking directly, and only, to His Son, and confirms the words of Jesus in John 5:37 that no person but Himself has ever heard the voice of God.

### Christ as the Lord God

It seems unlikely to me that Moses was hearing the voice of the angel because angels are never referred to as God or the Lord—they are not part of the Godhead. Therefore, because no one has heard the voice of God the Father, it appears to me that when God or the Lord was speaking to Moses, it was actually Christ who was speaking through the angel.

Could it have been the Holy Spirit who was speaking through the angel? There are instances in Scripture where the Holy Spirit spoke to specific men. As recorded in the passage of Acts 13:1-4, it says:

**While they [certain disciples] were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”** (Acts 13:2)

From this passage we do not know how the Holy Spirit spoke to these men, whether it was in the form of a person (there is no mention of an angel) or through a dream or vision while they fasted. Or, they may have just heard Him speak. However, I believe it was Christ who was speaking through the Holy Spirit because it was Christ who set apart (called) Saul, later known as Paul (Acts 13:9), to be His instrument (Acts 9:15-16). Please also consider the following passage about an earlier event:

**But an [the] angel of the Lord spoke to Philip saying, “Get up and go south to the road that descends from Jerusalem to Gaza.” (This is a desert road.) So he got up and went; and there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure; and he had come to Jerusalem to worship, and he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, “Go up and join this chariot.”** (Acts 8:26-29)

First, we see that the angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, and later, the Spirit spoke to Philip. There was a gap in time involved, so both the angel and the Holy Spirit may have spoken to Philip. Or, it may have been the Holy Spirit speaking through the angel in both instances. In any case, the words spoken to Philip were not attributed to God or the Lord as occurred in Acts 13:2.

Could it have been the Holy Spirit who was speaking through the angel to Moses? I admit that this is possible. However, Moses knew he was talking to the Lord, and the Holy Spirit is never referred to as *the Lord* or *our Lord*. Although the Old Testament record demonstrates that the Holy Spirit came upon individuals and gave them the words to speak (e.g., II Samuel 23:2; I Chronicles 12:18; II Chronicles 20:14-17), and even spoke to the prophet Ezekiel to tell him the words of the Lord to speak to the people of Israel (Ezekiel 3:22-27; 11:5-12), they did not receive the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit as the

disciples did.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, Scripture does not say that the Spirit came upon Moses, spoke to him, or spoke through him. Therefore, I think it was Christ who was speaking to Moses and not the Holy Spirit. Perhaps we will know the answer someday; in the meantime, here are some more of my thoughts for your consideration that I hope may give you a desire to search the Scriptures.

Let us take another look at Moses' encounter with the burning bush. When Moses asked God His name, God responded by telling him to tell the people of Israel that "I AM" sent him (Exodus 3:13-14). Much later, when Jesus was speaking with nonbelieving Jews in the temple, He referred to Himself as "I am." I believe that it is possible, therefore, that it was Christ who was speaking for God the Father, or as God, through the angel to Moses.

**"Surely You [Jesus] are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too; whom do You make Yourself out to be?" Jesus answered, "If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, 'He is our God'; and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and if I say that I do not know Him, I will be a liar like you, but I do know Him and keep His word. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad." So the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am." (John 8:53-58)**

In Old Testament accounts, the Lord or God *appeared* to or *spoke* to specific people in the Old Testament even though God the Father has not revealed Himself or spoken to people (Genesis 12:7; 35:9-13; I Kings 9:1-3). In his letter to the Corinthians believers, the Apostle Paul revealed that Christ led Israel during its sojourn in the wilderness. I believe that it was Christ who appeared in some form and spoke to those people as the Lord or the Lord God. This is just food for thought, and not necessary for us to understand; however, it should remind us to humble ourselves before our sovereign Almighty God whose wisdom and ways are beyond our comprehension (Romans 11:33-36).

**For I [Paul] do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers [the Israelites—Paul's ancestors] were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and all ate the same spiritual food; and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock [Rock] which followed them; and the rock [Rock] was Christ. (I Corinthians 10:1-4; see also Exodus 13:21-22)**

This passage informs us that Christ was with Israel in the wilderness and referred to Him as *the rock*. It is interesting that the KJV translators capitalized Rock<sup>21</sup> (Rocke in the original 1611 edition), likely linking Christ with references to the Rock in the Old Testament (II Samuel 23:1-3; Isaiah 26:4; 44:6-8). I suppose that the NASB translators were not certain about this connection, probably thinking that the Old Testament references were talking about God the Father as being the Rock. Maybe the Old Testament verses are veiled references to Christ. Or, perhaps God the Father and God the Son are both the Rock, which is possible considering other similarities described below.

As mentioned earlier, the book of Revelation contains the revelation of the ascended Christ to John, *through* the angel of God, providing details about the prophesied last days that had yet to be fulfilled.

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<sup>20</sup> Beginning at Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples in spiritual power, He began a new role that was different, and more direct, than His role prior to that time (John 16:12-15; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4).

<sup>21</sup> The KJV translators capitalized names and titles that they considered to be associated with the Godhead, while the NASB translators and editors capitalized names, titles, and personal pronouns of the Godhead.

The words of Christ recorded in Revelation 1:8 give us more insight into His divinity and the complexity of the Godhead.

**“I am the Alpha and the Omega, [the beginning and the ending,]” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”** (Revelation 1:8)

I recall that I was taught and believed that God the Father is the Alpha and Omega—*the first and the last, or the beginning and the ending*—referring to the eternal nature of God. This is true because God is eternal (Isaiah 41:1-4 and Isaiah 44:6-8 appear to be talking about God the Father as the first and the last, but may be prophecies about Christ), but Christ is speaking in this verse. Some think that these are the words of God the Father describing Himself, perhaps as a parenthetical statement to close John’s opening statement to the prophetic seven churches in Asia. However, subsequent passages confirm that it was Christ who was speaking about Himself (Revelation 21:6); Christ was in the beginning with God the Father and is God (John 1:1-3).

**When I saw Him [Christ], I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, “Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.”** (Revelation 1:17-18)

**“Behold, I [Christ] am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”** (Revelation 22:12-13)

**“Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel and his [Israel’s] Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: ‘I am the first and I am the last, and there is no God besides Me. Who is like Me? Let him proclaim and declare it; yes, let him recount it to Me in order, from the time that I established the ancient nation. And let them declare to them the things that are coming and the events that are going to take place. Do not tremble and do not be afraid; have I not long since announced it to you and declared it? And you are my witnesses. Is there any God besides Me, or is there any other Rock? I know of none.’”** (Isaiah 44:6-8)

Furthermore, when we think of God the Father, we think of Him as the Almighty God, which He is (I Chronicles 29:10-13; Psalm 91:1; II Corinthians 6:14-18; I Timothy 6:13-16; Revelation 11:15-17). However, the Son of God is also the Almighty God as revealed in Revelation 1:8 (see also Isaiah 9:6-7), thus giving further explanation of Christ being God (John 1:1).<sup>22</sup> This verse also says that the one who is speaking—Christ—is the Lord God, as God is often described in the Old Testament (e.g., Genesis 2:4-9; 15:2; Exodus 23:17). I believe that this provides evidence that it may have been Christ who was speaking to Moses as God and the Lord.

Finally, please recall John 1:1, where it says that Christ is the Word and that the Word is God. Perhaps we can construe from this verse that, among other things, Christ has always spoken the word of God for God the Father. That is, when *God*, or the *Lord*, or *the Lord God* was speaking to someone, it may have always been Christ who was speaking for God the Father (John 8:26-29; 12:49-50).

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<sup>22</sup> In Titus 3:4-7, we see that both God the Father and God the Son are our Savior. Brethren, the Godhead is beyond our understanding.

## Christ Spoke to Paul

When God was talking to Moses through His angel, Moses knew that he was talking to God and not conversing with the angel. That is, the angel was not an interpreter or a messenger, but apparently was the instrument through whom God communicated. Since no one has ever heard the voice of God, it seems to me that Moses was unknowingly talking to, and hearing the voice of, Christ. Now, please consider how God communicated with His leading enemy (I Timothy 1:15-16; Acts 8:1-3; Galatians 1:13-14)—the Jewish Pharisee Saul of Tarsus—who was appointed by God and our Lord Jesus Christ as the apostle of the Gentiles and who became known as Paul (Galatians 1:1; Acts 9:15-16; Romans 11:13; I Corinthians 1:1).<sup>23</sup>

**Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. As he was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” And he said, “Who are You, Lord?” And He said, “I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, but get up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do.” (Acts 9:1-6)**

In this instance, God did not communicate with Saul (Paul—Acts 13:9) through an angel as He did with Moses, but directly through His ascended and glorified Son Jesus Christ. He was hearing the voice of Christ. In his letters to believers—members of the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:12-13, 27)—Paul refers to multiple revelations from Jesus Christ (Galatians 1:11-17; Romans 16:25; I Corinthians 11:23-27; II Corinthians 12:1-7; Ephesians 3:1-12; I Thessalonians 4:15). He never mentions receiving any instructions or revelations from or through angels. In fact, he warned the Galatian brethren to beware of any teaching contrary to the gospel he taught, even if it came from an angel from heaven (Galatians 1:6-12).

**For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. (Galatians 1:11-12)**

A review of Scripture indicates that Paul is the only person with whom Christ directly communicated after His ascension. Peter never referred to new revelations from Christ, and the revelation of Christ to John was through the angel of God.

Brethren, it is important to understand that Paul, and only Paul, was the dispenser or steward of the gospel of the grace of God, just as Moses, and only Moses, was the dispenser of the Law of God. The Lord God, who I believe was the person of Jesus Christ, spoke His words through an angel to Moses. Paul received the revelation of the mystery and the gospel of the grace of God directly (not through an angel)

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<sup>23</sup> See my study **Follow Paul** that describes Paul’s background and how and why God chose him to be the apostle of the Gentiles.

from our glorified Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>24</sup> We should never diminish the roles in which God used these two men—Moses and Paul—to reveal Himself and His will to mankind.

### How Does God Communicate to Us?

It is not unusual to hear people say that they had received a revelation from God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, or an angel by saying something like “God told me...,” “The Lord said to me...,” “I had a dream...,” “In a vision...,” or “God (or Jesus, or an angel) whispered in my ear...,” etc., and then sharing their revelation. Is that how God communicates with us today? Please consider the warnings by the Apostle Paul to fellow believers in the following passages.

**Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement [*false humility*] and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen [*a figment of imagination*], inflated without cause by his fleshly mind, and not holding fast to the head [*Christ*], from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God.** (Colossians 2:18-19)

**I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him [*God*] who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! As we have said before [*when we were with you*], so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received [*from us*], he is to be accursed!** (Galatians 1:6-10)

These are serious warnings. Brethren, the word of God is complete. There have been no new revelations since the apostles Paul and John. He is not communicating with us through His angel(s) directly or through dreams or visions. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit does not speak to us like He did with the prophets and the disciples as demonstrated earlier in this study. God has revealed everything that we need to know in His word to serve and live for Him—to walk worthy of, or as befitting, our salvation in Christ (Ephesians 4:1-3; Colossians 1:9-12).<sup>25</sup> It is God who opens our eyes (and heart) to understand His word, through the inward working of His Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:15-21; I Corinthians 2:6-16).

**All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching [*doctrine*], for reproof, for correction, for training [*instruction*] in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate [*complete*], [*fully*] equipped for every good work.** (II Timothy 3:16-17)

**Of this church [*the body of Christ*] I was made a minister according to the stewardship [*dispensation*] from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might full carry out [*fulfil/complete*] the preaching of the word of God, that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His [*God's*] saints [*believers*], to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. We proclaim Him [*Christ*], admonishing every**

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<sup>24</sup> See my studies **The Mystery (God's Secret Plan)**, **The Two Messages of Our Lord Jesus Christ**, and others that describe *the mystery* and *the gospel of the grace of God*.

<sup>25</sup> See my study **Walk Worthy** and others that address how God expects us to live each day as His children.

**man [believer/child of God] and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ.** (Colossians 1:25-28)

Why is God communicating differently with us? I address this question in several other studies referenced throughout this study but, basically, we are in the dispensation or administration of the grace of God and no longer under the Law of Moses (Ephesians 3:1-12; Acts 20:24; Romans 3:21-26; 6:14; Galatians 3:1-3, 10-14; Colossians 2:13-14). God is not working with or through Israel today, but is working with and through individual believing Jews and Gentiles without distinction—He is working through us, the members of the body of Christ (Romans 11:25; I Corinthians 12:12-13; Galatians 3:28; Romans 10:12).

## Closing Thoughts

Prior to His ascension into heaven, our Lord Jesus Christ revealed to His disciples how He had been spoken of (and prophesied about) in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and Psalms. This study focused on what is said or revealed about Christ, in veiled terms or as comparisons, in the Law of Moses. As I researched this subject in Scripture, it became apparent to me that our Lord is spoken about or represented in the Law far more often than I had previously thought. I would not be surprised if this study just scrapes the surface of what the Law fully says about our Lord.

I hope I have provided sufficient scriptural evidence that the books of the Law revealed, looked forward to, or represented Christ in the following veiled references:

- He, as a child, would be called out of Egypt.
- He would be a prophet like Moses.
- He would be the Lamb of God to take away the sins of His people of Israel.
- He would be the High Priest of Israel.
- He would be the mediator between God and Israel.
- He would be the righteousness of the Law of Moses because He would fulfill the righteousness of the Law.

Regarding my initial thought that it may have been Christ who was speaking to Moses, this study reinforced that position although I confess that I still am not absolutely certain that this was the case. However, I believe that the following summary of my observations, as well as additional Scriptural evidence, are worth consideration.

In the record of the book of Exodus it seems straightforward that God talked directly to Moses. We read such phrases as, “God called to him (Moses) from the midst of the bush and said” (Exodus 3:4), “The Lord said to Moses” (Exodus 19:9), and, “Then God spoke all these words” (Exodus 20:1). However, at least 1,500 years after these events, we discover the following truths:

- No one had heard the voice of God the Father besides Christ Himself (John 5:37).
- An angel was speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai (Acts 7:38).
- Christ was the *spiritual rock* that accompanied Israel in the wilderness after escaping Egypt (I Corinthians 10:1-4).

Brethren, these statements in Scripture are not contradictory—all are true. However, they are representative of how God did not reveal all of His truth at once. He did so in a progressive manner. In doing so, we are able to see that Christ is the main subject of the Bible from beginning to end.<sup>26</sup>

If we look back before God spoke to Moses, we have examples of God speaking to others beginning with Adam (Genesis 2:15-17). Regarding Abram (Abraham) in particular, we have references such as “Now the Lord said to Abram” (Genesis 12:1) and “The Lord appeared to Abram and said” (Genesis 12:7). On that occasion when God made His covenant with Abraham, there is no mention of an angel communicating with him—Scripture says that the Lord was talking to Abraham. If no one has heard the voice of God or seen His form, who *appeared* to Abram and talked to him? Was it the angel of the Lord or was it Christ? Later, however, when God instructed Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac (as a test of his faith), the angel of the Lord was speaking to Abraham (Genesis 22:1-12). The angel was speaking as God (the Lord), but was Abraham hearing the voice of the angel or the voice of Christ? I believe that we cannot know for certain, but it would not surprise me if Abraham was hearing the voice of Christ.

**But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” He said, “Do not stretch out your hand against the lad [*Isaac*], and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.”** (Genesis 22:11-12)

God spoke to Moses through His angel, and the angel spoke as if he was God. Because no one has heard the voice of God the Father, it is possible, therefore, that Moses was hearing the voice of Christ. The same may be true in the garden of Eden (Genesis 3:8-19), with Noah (Genesis 6:13-22), and in other instances when we read that God or the Lord was speaking to someone.

Is it important to know if these people were hearing the voice of the angel or the voice of Christ? Maybe not, but I think it is. Jesus said He was spoken of in the Law of Moses, and this may have been one of the things—perhaps one of the most important things—He revealed to His disciples. I believe that it reinforces that truth that our Lord Jesus Christ is the central figure throughout Scripture. Not only was He spoken about from Genesis to Revelation, but it appears to me that He was the one speaking as God—the word of God is the Word of God.

This study has also reaffirmed that it is important that we do not say that the Bible *clearly* says something when, in cases such as this, Scripture is not definitive. We need to be careful and humble when we convey to others what the Bible says and be ready to humbly defend our position with Scripture in its proper context. Furthermore, we must be ready to correct our position as our understanding increases by the grace of God.

**Be diligent [*endeavor*] to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling [*rightly dividing*] the word of truth.** (II Timothy 2:15)

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<sup>26</sup> See my study **Our Lord Jesus Christ** that explains how Christ is represented and revealed to us throughout Scripture.