

The Son of God in the Old Testament

Jesus Christ claimed to have been begotten of God, “his only begotten Son ... the only begotten Son of God” (Jhn 3:16,18). And that He had “proceeded forth” and “came out from” God, “I proceeded forth and came from God” (Jhn 8:42), “I came out from God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world” (Jhn 16:27-28). He was begotten, not created. His beginning was His begetting.

Having been begotten of God as the same kind of divine being, He had the ability to create all things: “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made” (Jhn 1:3), “the world was made by him” (Jhn 1:10); “God, who created all things by Jesus Christ” (Eph 3:9); “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him” (Col 1:16); “by whom also he made the worlds” (Heb 1:2).

Throughout the six days of creation and seventh day of rest, it was said to be *‘ēlōhîm* or God that created, “In the beginning God [*‘ēlōhîm* 430] created the heaven and the earth” (Gen 1:1), “And on the seventh day God [*‘ēlōhîm* 430] ended his work which he had made” (Gen 2:2). But starting in the second chapter which details the creation of the man and woman, it was *Yḥōvâ ‘ēlōhîm* or Jehovah God, “And the LORD [*Yḥōvâ* 3068] God [*‘ēlōhîm* 430] formed man *of* the dust of the ground” (2:7), “And the rib, which the LORD [*Yḥōvâ* 3068] God [*‘ēlōhîm* 430] had taken from man, made he a woman” (2:22). The Son of God created all things under God’s direction as His Agent. They both are said to have created the man and woman, “Let **us** **make** **man** in **our** image, after **our** likeness ... **male and female** created he them” (Gen 1:26,27), but it was the Son that did the work.

It was the Son of God that called to Adam after he sinned, “And the LORD [*Yḥōvâ* 3068] God [*‘ēlōhîm* 430] called unto Adam” (3:9), spoke to the woman, “And the LORD [*Yḥōvâ* 3068] God [*‘ēlōhîm* 430] said unto the woman” (3:13), and to the serpent, “And the LORD [*Yḥōvâ* 3068] God [*‘ēlōhîm* 430] said unto the serpent” (3:14). When Jehovah God walked with Adam and Eve in the garden, they weren’t seeing God but the Son of God. The Hebrew word for God is *‘ēlōhîm* but *Yḥōvâ* is His name as He later revealed to Moses, “The LORD [*Yḥōvâ* 3068] God ... this *is* my name for ever” (Exo 3:15).

The Son of God declared that nobody but Himself had seen God the Father, “Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father” (Jhn 6:46). And John wrote twice, “No man hath seen God at any time” (Jhn 1:18; 1Jo 4:12). All the times in the Old Testament that people were said to have seen God, they actually saw the Son of God: “And the LORD [*Yḥōvâ* 3068] appeared unto Abram” (Gen 12:7); “I have seen God [*‘ēlōhîm* 430] face to face” (Gen 32:30); “And they saw the God [*‘ēlōhîm* 430] of Israel ... they saw God [*‘ēlōhîm* 430]” (Exo 24:10,11); “we have seen God [*‘ēlōhîm* 430]” (Jdg 13:22); “I saw the LORD [*Yḥōvâ* 3068] sitting on his throne” (1Ki 22:19); “This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD [*Yḥōvâ* 3068]” (Eze 1:28).

When Christ said “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw *it*, and was glad” (Jhn 8:56), it was the day that as *mal’āk Yḥōvâ* or Messenger of Jehovah, He stopped Abraham from sacrificing Isaac and made the promise to him, “And the angel [*mal’āk* 4397] of the LORD [*Yḥōvâ* 3068] called unto him out of heaven” (Gen 22:11), “And the angel [*mal’āk* 4397] of the LORD [*Yḥōvâ* 3068] called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time ... By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD [*Yḥōvâ* 3068]” (Gen 22:15,16). Christ claimed to be the Messenger of Jehovah, the Messenger that spoke to Hagar, Abraham, Moses, Balaam, Gideon, Manoah, David, Elijah, and Zechariah. Therefore, Jehovah interacting with His people throughout the Old Testament, wasn’t God Himself but His Messenger, His Son.

The Son of God was the Messenger of Jehovah as His agent, emissary, delegate, or representative. When people saw Jehovah, they saw God’s Son in the place, or in the stead of God. Thus, it could be said that they saw God. This doesn’t make God’s Son, God Himself. When John said, “the Word was God” (Jhn 1:1), it was simply a metaphor. As the Son isn’t literally the Word or Message, He isn’t literally God either. He said Himself, “And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me” (Jhn 12:45), “he that hath seen me hath seen the Father” (Jhn 14:9). When people saw Him and heard Him, they saw and heard God the Father vicariously, not literally.

The issue in Hebrews chapter one, “And of the angels he saith ... But unto the Son he *saith*” (vs. 7,8), was that many Jews claimed *mal’āk Yḥōvâ* was only an angel while the writer was proving from the Scriptures it was God’s Son. He wasn’t God Himself but His representative, “the express image of his person” (v. 3), “the exact representation of his being” (NIV), “the representation of his essence” (NET).