



Special Blessings in the Word of God!

"In the beginning..."

Genesis 1:1-5

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void, and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. ***Then God said,*** "Let there be light;" and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day."

John 1:1-5

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men."

The Apostle John began his gospel with a rabbinic teaching device called a *remez* or "hint." His Jewish audience was reminded of Genesis 1:1 and the Hebrew words, *bereshit* ("in the beginning"). They were also aware of the Jewish belief in the pre-existence of the Torah. In the tractate Pesachim 54b of the Talmud we find the following commentary: "Of the seven things which were created before the creation of the world, the Torah is first and repentance the second." The existence of the Word even before creation is a traditional Jewish concept.

Likewise, there was also a rabbinic understanding that Messiah was there in the beginning with God. The first mention of Messiah by the rabbis is found in a discussion on Genesis 1:2. The Spirit of God that moved or brooded over the face of the deep is identified as being "the Spirit of King Messiah."

God spoke the world into being. "God said" and there was light. The apostle John identifies this Word at creation as Yeshua, the Messiah. He is the source of light both at creation, and for all time. He was with the Father **before the world** was (John 17:5). Yeshua is the living Word of God who was present at and participated in the creation of the world.

This truth is beautifully illustrated in a vibrantly colored 18" x 24" glossy poster, ready to be framed to adorn your home. Yeshua, under His talit, hands outstretched, is the Word made flesh (see above).

Yeshua as Creator

We read in John chapter 1 verse 3 that **all things were made by Him** (Yeshua). Thus, Yeshua is identified as Creator. This, as well as other aspects of Yeshua as deity, are clearly explained in Chuck & Karen Cohen's book, **Roots of our Faith** (a **must** for your personal library!) The Cohens mention several New Covenant verses that reinforce the truth of Yeshua as Creator. Ephesians 3:9 tells us that God created all things by Yeshua the Messiah. In Colossians 1:16-17, Paul repeats this same truth: *"For by him (Messiah Yeshua) were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible..."* Hebrews 1:2 gives further confirmation, testifying to the truth that God, *"has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things through whom also He made the worlds."* The writer to the Hebrews goes on to describe Yeshua as the *"brightness of God's glory and the express image of His person."*

Although the Tanach (Old Covenant) clearly states that God, the Father, is the Creator, Psalm 33:6 helps us reconcile the roles of Father and Son in creation. *"By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth."* God the Father created everything through His Word, later manifested in the flesh as Messiah Yeshua (John 1:14). The breath of God's mouth present at creation was the *ruach* (Hebrew for "breath" or "spirit"). We see the presence of God's Spirit in Creation as well as His Word.

"And the Word became flesh..."

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

This is the INCARNATION – to be made flesh, to take on "carne" (meat, flesh). God chose to have His Word become flesh by sending that Word, Yeshua, to earth in the form of an infant. The infant **had** to be a Jewish infant because according to the plan of God since the beginning, salvation is *"of the Jews."* God had promised a deliverer to His chosen people. His salvation would eventually be made available to all nations of the earth. His name *Yeshua* (literally "salvation") given by an angelic messenger, indicated what Messiah would be and do on earth. Yeshua's birth had to be a virgin birth because the salvation of the world could not be accomplished by a mere man. Only God Himself could provide eternal atonement for sin, so He arranged for the *Ruach Ha Kodesh* (Holy Spirit) to come upon a Jewish maiden (virgin) named Miriam. Thus God, working by His Spirit, became the Father of the humanity of Yeshua. The baby conceived in Miriam's womb was holy, sinless, the Son of God, **the Word made flesh**.

Do you find the idea of the virgin birth hard to believe? Consider the creation of the first man, Adam. God created him from dust. The dirt wasn't even alive. Then there is Eve. She was created from the rib of a man. If God could create a woman from the rib of a man, why couldn't he create a man from the womb of a virgin? The God of Israel also had said through the prophet

Isaiah that He was going to perform this particular miracle. 700 years before Yeshua was born, Isaiah prophesied: *"Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel (God with us)."* (Isaiah 7:14)

Even the first passage in the Torah which speaks of redemption mentions a Messiah who would not be born in the normal way from a man's seed. Instead, He would be the *"seed of a woman"* who would mortally wound the head of the serpent (Genesis 3:15). Yeshua was not born physically from Joseph. For this reason, his origin is identified with Mary.

Yeshua as the Word

John, the apostle closest to the heart of Yeshua, referred to Him in all his writings as "the Word" (*davar*). John describes his relationship with the Word that became flesh like this: *"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we **have seen with our eyes**, (our emphasis) which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled concerning the Word of life –"* (1 John 1:1)

John and the other talmidim (disciples) were eyewitnesses of Yeshua's majesty (2 Peter 1:16). They had fellowship with the Father and with His Son, the Word, Yeshua Ha Mashiach.

In his later years, John had a vision of Yeshua's second coming to earth (which we wait for daily). He was still the Word, the same Word that He has been from the beginning: *"He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: King of Kings and Lord of Lords."* (Revelation 19:13-16)

Why will the Word of God return to earth wearing a garment dipped in blood? Because God always fulfills His Word, and a prophecy given by Isaiah 700 years before Yeshua's birth will be fulfilled: *"Why is Your apparel red, and Your garments like one who treads in the winepress?"* (Isaiah 63:2) The next chapter, Isaiah 64 begins with: *"Oh, that You would rend the heavens! That You would come down!"* Yeshua did this once. He will do it again!!

Did God become man or did man become God?

"Then I said, 'Behold (Lo) I come: in the scroll of the Book it is written of Me. I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law is within in my heart.'" (Psalm 40:7, Hebrews 10:7)

The above prophecy from Psalm 40 verse 7 is the Word of God, Yeshua, speaking in a pre-incarnate proclamation, declaring his future coming to earth in both a fulfillment of prophecy and an act of obedience. Yeshua came to earth because it was God's expressed plan for the redemption of mankind. Yeshua's motive in coming, was to do His Father's will. In Hebrew *lo* is *Hineni* ("here I am")... This was His delight. It was in His heart to please His Father.

The incarnation (*hitgalmut* in Hebrew) had its roots deep in the Tanach. It did not begin with a baby in Bethlehem. Nor did it begin with a thirty-year old male Israelite claiming to be the Son of God. The incarnation (God taking on the form of man) began in the heart of God *"in the beginning,"* perhaps even before the creation of the world, since God knew the heart of man, and had a plan for his redemption.

Yeshua was God's salvation for fallen man. The Hebrew word *davar* ("word") also means "thing" or "matter." Richard Wurmbrand, a precious Jewish brother in Yeshua (who is now with the Lord), once said in referring to Yeshua and John 1:1: "In the beginning was the Real Thing." Real love. Real hope. Real life. Yeshua. He gave up the glory He had with the Father before the world existed (John 17:5) to come to earth to dwell among sinful men. We read of His advent in Philippians 2:6-8:

"Who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation taking the form of a servant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross."

Yeshua came to earth to show mankind the true nature of God, man's need for redemption, and God's faithfulness in providing a solution. The idea of God becoming a human being is not totally foreign to the Jewish mind or the Hebrew Scriptures. There are many examples in the Tanach of God appearing as a man. Dr. David Stern mentions some of them in his **Jewish New Testament Commentary**: to Avraham (Genesis 18), to Ya'akov (Genesis 32:25-33) to Moshe (Exodus 3), to Y'hoshua (Joshua 5:13-6:5). In these passages and more, the terms *Adonai* and "the angel of Adonai" (or *Elohim* and "the angel of Elohim") are used interchangeably. In some of them the angel of Adonai (or Elohim) is spoken of as a man.

If God chooses, He can **appear** among men as a man. He can also **become** a human being. He has the power to come as a baby, born of a virgin. The same God who created all things in the beginning is able to perform any kind of creative miracle He chooses. All things are possible with God!

The incarnation does **not** mean that God was turned into man, nor that God ceased to be God and began to be man, but rather that, remaining God, He assumed or took on a new nature: human. This nature was united to the Divine nature in one being or person, Yeshua, true God and true man. *"For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily..." (Colossians 2:9)*. Although man, He is still **all** God.

We can never fully understand the incarnation. It is to some degree a mystery and an act of love that defies comprehension. But God is God, and His ways are higher than our ways. If you ask Him to reveal the truth to **you**, He will!

Our Kinsman Redeemer

Yeshua came to earth to be our "kinsman redeemer." This Jewish concept is first found in the Bible in Leviticus 25. An Israelite could only be redeemed by one of his brethren, someone of his family. The kinsman-redeemer was called a *goel* (go-EL in Hebrew). The root meaning is to redeem someone from difficulty and danger or avenge their blood. Redemption by a *goel* involves the payment of a ransom.

Mankind, separated from God by sin, needed a redeemer. Either we had to pay for our sin by death (*"The wages of sin is death..."* Romans 6:23), or someone else had to pay for us. Yeshua became like us, a human being, in order to fulfill the requirements of a kinsman-redeemer.

A beautiful type of Yeshua as *goel* is found in the Book of Ruth. Boaz, Ruth's kinsman-redeemer, was also born in Bethlehem. A man of strength, obedient to God's Law, and lord of the harvest, Boaz purchased a bride for himself (who happened to be non-Jewish). One of our newest

Jewish Jewels television programs, "Ruth," produced last month, tells this love story in its entirety. Order a VHS copy for yourself or a loved one and **especially** anyone whose name is Ruth or who has a heart like Ruth. They will be blessed and, Lord willing, receive the redemption of their Boaz if they have not already done so!!

Yeshua, our Boaz, provided redemption for us through His blood. In coming to earth, He was "Immanuel, God with us." (Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23) The Son of God became the Son of man so that the children of men might become the sons of God. (Ephesians 1:7, Colossians 1:14, Hebrews 9:12)

*May Yeshua, the "Light of the world," brighten
your life during this holiday season. BLESSINGS!
Neil & Jamie*