

JESUS WAS NOT THE AGENT OF THE GENESIS CREATION

Although Trinitarians wrongly hold that Jesus was the co-creator of the universe with God the Father, the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (WBTS) of Jehovah's Witnesses explains that the Father - Jehovah - **directly created only the archangel Michael** (who later became Jesus) and then He used this pre-human Jesus i.e. Michael as the agent for the creation of everything else. Nevertheless, Jehovah's Witnesses teach that Jehovah was the sole creator of the universe because He was its architect. So, unlike the Trinitarians, they do not view Michael as having been a 'co-creator' because this would infer that Michael assisted in the creation and together with Jehovah they both made the creation i.e. **two creators!** This is not an acceptable view to the WBTS. So it is sometimes illustrated as being similar to the statement that Solomon built the Jerusalem temple but he did not do any of the physical building work, this being done by the builders. However, this illustration falls down because this is comparing a mortal man with the Almighty God. Solomon as the prime mover for the construction of the temple needed a team of builders; whereas the Almighty **God does not need anyone to assist** in the work of creating the universe just as He states and as we shall see from the Scriptures. So in Watchtower theology the question would have to be asked: If Jehovah, as being only the architectural designer for everything in the universe, assigned Michael to do the 'hands on' work according to that blueprint, would it not be Michael's **hands** doing the work and so making him "the builder" or "the maker" of everything? Yet, in contradiction of these thoughts, the Scriptures use such terms as "builder," and "maker" with his "**own hands**" with **reference only to Jehovah** as for example: "He that *constructed* all things is God" (*Heb. 3:4*). This is one of many Scriptures that we shall examine, where Jehovah declares Himself to be, not just the designer of the universe, but also the 'hands on' maker of the universe. Note also that in the Genesis One account the words 'create' (*Heb. bara*) and 'make' (*Heb. asa*) are both attributed to God so there can be no argument to the effect that God was creator by virtue of being the architect, but Michael was the maker by virtue of any supposed 'hands on' work.

We also note that in the 'Reasoning' book under the heading **Creation** it says: "Creation...means that Almighty God designed and **brought into existence the universe**, including other spirit persons and all the basic kinds of life upon the earth." Yet, in the Bible Topics for Discussion at the back of the NWT and under the heading **Jesus**, it says: "Firstborn of God, **created all things**" (our emphasis). So, apart from this contradiction, it seems that we really are back to the thought of there being two creators in the JW theology - one, namely, Jehovah to create Michael and design the universe and the other one, namely, Michael to be the maker/creator of the universe and everything in it! So they are either independent creators or co-creators to one another - working in harmony. The latter is the reality of Watchtower theology, making Michael a co-creator with Jehovah.

NOTE: Evidently Jesus does act as God's agent, but in producing the New Creation which does not bring about new material things (Please see STUDY 11). In being this agent, Jesus works in harmony with the Father and is therefore also the co-creator of the New Creation by virtue of his sacrifice.

THE IDEA OF AN AGENT OF CREATION

To understand the background to the concept of an agent for the creation of the universe we first need to look at how the idea of a pre-existent Jesus as the archangel Michael originated. The first thoughts of pre-existence originated in the pagan world with PLATO and were later developed by XENOCRATES (d.314 BC). In time, the first century Middle Platonic philosopher NUMENIUS introduced the idea of a **2nd transcendental entity** between the Supreme Being and the universe. This entity, subordinate to the Supreme God, was called the **Demiurge** - meaning *maker* or *builder*. Because matter was viewed as evil God could not have any association with it. Only the Demiurge could deal

with it and so he acted as builder or agent of creation. Furthermore, the concept that Jesus had acted as agent of creation because he had existed in a different form prior to birth has been believed by many since the Christian philosopher Justin Martyr first used the word *pre-existence* with reference to Jesus in about 150 AD. However, Justin was a believer in the idea that Socrates and Plato were inspired by God. He had been thoroughly schooled in the Greek philosophical thinking of his day, including the thoughts of Numenius whose ideas he found attractive. With his mind so receptive, Justin found it easy to apply such ideas in his interpretation of the Christian Scriptures. This was similar to the thinking of the Jewish philosopher PHILO, who had earlier reinterpreted the Hebrew Scriptures in pagan Greek terms. In spite of the fact that the word *demiourgos* appears only in Hebrews 11:10 and refers to God, JUSTIN applied the Demiurge concept to Jesus speaking of him as an “arithmetically second God” saying:

There is and there is said to be *another God* and Lord subject to the Maker of all things; who is also called **an Angel**, because he announces to all men whatsoever the Maker of all things.

To develop his thinking Justin inaccurately quoted and even modified Scripture. He held that Jesus only came **through** Mary not **from** her as Matthew describes. Justin also stated:

...though I should *not be able to prove his pre-existence*...For some of our race, who admit that he is the Christ, while holding him to be **man of men**; with whom *I do not agree*.

This is in direct contradiction of the Apostle John’s words that:

- ❖ “Every inspired expression that confesses Jesus Christ as having come **in the flesh** originates with God...” (1 John 4:2) *i.e. a fully human Jesus.*

Catholic theologian Karl-Josef Kuschel shows this to be the first major step away from biblical Christianity when he makes the comment that:

The Christology of **Jewish Christianity** which had been dominant for decades and **knew of no pre-existence** Christology was increasingly swept aside and was finally branded heretical.

Earlier the Apostle Paul had foretold that:

- ❖ “They will ... wander off into myths” (2 Tim. 4:3, 4 ESV). *He also said at 2 Corinthians 11:4 that some would come “preaching another Jesus.”*

This pagan Greek teaching of a pre-existent Jesus was further developed by the Gnostics who taught that Jesus was not a human but ‘a spirit being’ inhabiting a human body.

WITH NO PERSONAL AGENT MENTIONED JEHOVAH ALONE PRODUCED THE GENESIS CREATION

ACCORDING TO JEHOVAH HIMSELF

- ❖ “I Jehovah am doing everything, stretching out the heavens **by myself**, laying out the earth. Who was with me?” (Isa. 44:24). “**all alone**” - NASB, ESV, NKJ, REB. The NLT renders it as: “*I alone stretched out the heavens.*”

According to the Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges this means: “there was none to help me.”

It has been argued that in Daniel 4:30 the king of Babylon’s boast of: “*Is not this Babylon the Great that I myself have built for the royal house with the strength of my might...?*” nullifies the thought that Jehovah did not have an agent as indicated in Isaiah 44:24. However, this was just a boast by Nebuchadnezzar and giving no credit to his architects or actual builders. In contrast to such boastfulness, if Jehovah had used an agent for the creation of the universe he would have given that person credit for such work. However, no such statements are anywhere made in the Scriptures

regarding the making of the universe because there was no personal agent. But rather Jehovah says:

- ❖ “**I myself** have made the earth and have created man upon it. I - **my own hands** have stretched out the heavens” (*Isa. 45:12*).
- ❖ “...**my own hand** laid the foundation of the earth, and **my own right hand** extended out the heavens” (*Isa. 48:13*).
- ❖ “...when **I** founded the earth” (*Job 38:4*).
- ❖ “Now all these things **my own hand** has made” (*Isa. 66:2*).
- ❖ “**My hands** made all these things” (*Acts 7:50*).

Clearly, Jehovah is saying that He did not use a personal agent for the making of the universe.

ACCORDING TO HEBREW SCRIPTURE WRITERS

- ❖ “And **God** proceeded to **make** the expanse, the two great luminaries, the great sea monsters, the wild beast...” etc... “And **God** proceeded to **create** the man” (*Gen. 1:7, 16, 21, 25, 27*).
- ❖ “Jehovah the Creator of the heavens ... the **Former of** the earth and the **Maker of it**” (*Isa. 45:18*).
- ❖ “God...has been resting from all **his** work that God has created” (*Gen. 2:3*).
- ❖ “Stretching out the heavens **by himself**” (*Job 9:8*).
- ❖ “...Jehovah, he has made the very heavens” (*Psa. 96:5*).
- ❖ “He is the Maker of the earth” (*Jer. 10:12*).
- ❖ “You are Jehovah alone. **You yourself** have made the heavens” (*Neh. 9:6*).
- ❖ “When as yet **he** had not *made the earth*...When **he** prepared (“established”) the heavens. When **he** decreed (“inscribed”) a circle on the face of the watery deep. **He** made firm the cloud masses. **He** decreed (“marked out”) the foundations of the earth” (*Prov. 8:26-29*).

All these inspired writers attest to the fact that God used no personal agent for creating the universe or for preparing the earth or for making the first humans.

ACCORDING TO JESUS, PAUL AND HEAVENLY BEINGS

- ❖ “...**He** who created them from the beginning” (*Matt. 19:4*).
- ❖ “...the creation which **God** created” (*Mark 13:19*).

If Jesus had been the agent of the Genesis creation he gave no hint of this in spite of having many opportunities to do so. Furthermore, Paul and the heavenly beings also acknowledge that God was the constructor of the universe by His own hands:

- ❖ “**God** made the heaven and the earth...and all things” (*Acts 14:15*).
- ❖ “...the **God** that made the world and all the things in it” (*Acts 17:24-26*).
- ❖ “...appointed him [*Jesus*] over the works of **Your [God’s]** hands” (*Heb. 2:7b*).
- ❖ “**The One** through whom all things are” (*Heb. 2:10*).
- ❖ “He that *constructed* all things is **God**” (*Heb. 3:4*).
- ❖ “**God** rested from all His work” (*Heb. 4:3, 4*).
- ❖ “**The One**...who created the heaven...and earth and the things in it” (*Rev. 10:6*).
- ❖ “Fear God...the One who made the heaven and the earth...” (*Rev. 14:17*).
- ❖ “From **Him** and through (not ‘by’ as in KIT) Him and to Him are all things” (*Rom. 11:36*).
- ❖ “**You** created all things, because of your will they were created and existed” (*Rev. 4:11*).

Because all these statements are completely personal to Jehovah it is impossible to imply that He is only the architect and that a personal agent did all the actual work, especially in view of the statement that “*God rested*” after the creation work, rather than anyone else.

GOD USED HIS WORD / WISDOM / POWER / SPIRIT

- ❖ “God proceeded to **say**: Let light...” (*Gen. 1: 3*).
- ❖ “By the **word** of Jehovah the heavens were made” (*Ps. 33:6*).
- ❖ “So my **word** that goes forth from my mouth will prove to be” (*Isa. 55:11*).
- ❖ “...the earth was formed...by the **word** of God” (*2 Peter 3:5*).
- ❖ “God’s own **spirit** made me” (*Job 33:4*).
- ❖ “He is the maker of the earth by **his power**, by **his wisdom**” (*Jer. 10:12*).

Although Jesus is the agent of the new creation there is no mention in the Scriptures of God’s use of another person as agent for creating the things described in Genesis chapters 1 and 2. Jehovah did it all by His own power/spirit.

TEXTS MISAPPLIED TO JESUS

GENESIS 1:26 “LET US MAKE MAN IN OUR IMAGE”

In the Genesis account these words were most likely spoken to the angels who had been on hand to observe at least parts of God’s creative activity:

- ❖ “...when I [*God*] founded the earth...**the morning stars** cried out joyfully” (*Job 38:4, 7*).

The New International Bible Commentary notes that: “The rabbinic interpretation that God is speaking to the angels is more attractive for man’s creation affects them (*Ps. 8:5; 1 C. 6:3*), cf. *Job 38:7*. But there is no suggestion of angelic cooperation.” (p. 115).

The Notes to the NIV give the same understanding: “Us...our...God speaks as creator-king, announcing his crowning work to the members of his heavenly court (see *3:22; 11:7; Isa 6:8*; see also *1 Ki. 22:19, 23; Job 15:8; Jer. 23:18*).”

GOD’S HEAVENLY ASSEMBLY OF ANGELS

- ❖ “God is stationing himself in **the assembly of the Divine One** (“in the divine council” *ESV*); in the middle of the gods [*“angels” Syriac Peshitta*] he judges” (*Ps. 82:1*). (*See also note Daniel 7:9-10*).

If the words of Genesis 1:26 were spoken to the assembly of angels, then Michael would have been included; but that does not in any way mean that Jehovah was speaking *only* to Michael or to someone who supposedly was later to become Jesus. The Scriptures clearly show that Jesus came *into existence* in Mary’s womb (*Luke 1:35*). Note 47^{sn} of the *NET Bible* explains that:

The plural form of the verb has been the subject of much discussion through the years, and not surprisingly several suggestions have been put forward. Many Christian theologians interpret it as an early hint of plurality within the Godhead, but this view imposes later trinitarian concepts on the ancient text. Some have suggested the plural verb indicates majesty, but the plural of majesty is not used with verbs. C. Westermann (*Genesis, 1:145*) argues for a plural of “deliberation” here, but his proposed examples of this use (*2 Sam 24:14; Isa 6:8*) do not actually support his theory. In *2 Sam 24:14* David uses the plural as representative of all Israel, and in *Isa 6:8* the Lord speaks on behalf of his heavenly court. In its ancient Israelite context the plural is most naturally understood as referring to God and his heavenly court (see *1 Kgs 22:19-22; Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6; Isa 6:1-8*). (The most well-known members of this court are God’s messengers, or angels. In *Gen 3:5* the serpent may refer to this group as “gods/divine beings.” See the note on the word “evil” in *3:5*.) If this is the case, God invites the heavenly court to participate in the creation of humankind (perhaps in the role of offering praise, see *Job 38:7*), but he himself is the one who does the actual creative work (v. 27). Of course, this view does assume that the members of the heavenly court possess the divine “image” in some way. Since the image is closely associated with rulership, perhaps they share the divine image in that they, together with God and under his royal authority, are the executive authority over the world.

In fact, Genesis 1:26 is a reference only to *the creation of mankind* on Day 6 and **not to the earlier creative activity**. It therefore harmonizes with the statement in Isaiah 44:24 that Jehovah created the heavens and the earth by himself and asking rhetorically: “Who was with me?” as implying that no one else participated in that creative work. The proof that only God was the creator of the first humans comes in the next verse:

❖ “And **God** proceeded to create (Heb. ‘*bara*’) the man in His image” (*Gen. 1:27*).

Because the Hebrew word *bara* – meaning “he created” is never used of the work of any created being, angel or man, but is exclusively applicable to God’s work (BDB. p. 135) it is not possible that a supposedly pre-human Jesus (a created being) could have been used to perform the actual creation in Genesis.

THE THREE OTHER OCCURENCES OF GOD’S REFERENCE TO “US”

❖ “...the man has become like one of *us*, knowing good and bad” (*Gen. 3:22*).

❖ “Come now! Let *us* go down and there confuse their language” (*Gen. 11:7*).
Yet in *Genesis 18:21* God says “**I** will go down.”

❖ “Whom shall I send, and who will go for *us*” (*Isa. 6:8*).

It is evident from 1 Kings 22:19 that Jehovah encourages the angels to get involved in the decision-making process. Therefore it appears that in each of the above cases Jehovah is speaking to His assembly of angels and not to a single angel.

PROVERBS 8:22, 23, 24 and 30

In these texts God’s wisdom is wrongly taken as an actual person who acted as agent of creation rather than correctly viewed as **personification** (*prosopopoeia*). Personification is a figure of speech whereby something such as an inanimate object or an abstract idea e.g. a quality, is given animated (human or animal) characteristics. Personification never involves a literal person. The Adam Clarke Commentary on Proverbs 8 says:

Nor has it any other meaning in this whole chapter, whatever some of the fathers may have dreamed, who find allegorical meanings everywhere.

NOTE: The feminine gender of “wisdom” (Heb. *hokma* and Gk ***Sophia***) does not bear on our study.

NOT AN ACTUAL PERSON

❖ “Jehovah himself *produced me* as the beginning of his way, the earliest of his achievements of long ago. From *time indefinite* I was installed, from the start, from times earlier than the earth”
(*Verses 22, 23*).

Word for word from the Hebrew is:

“*he-possessed-me....from-eternity*” (Heb. '*oh.lam* = antiquity, ancient time, days of old. Brown, Driver and Briggs, p. 761 1a).

Proverbs 1:20,21; 2: 2-4; 3:13-18; 8:1-21; 8:22-36; 9:1-5 all **personify** wisdom by using the pronouns **she** and **her** in all Bible translations, the Hebrew interlinear and the Septuagint. However, the NWT translates these pronouns as **it** and **its**; yet the personification is still obvious throughout these chapters because of the use of the pronouns ‘I’ and ‘me’. *Insight on the Scriptures* Volume 2 on the subject of SPIRIT on p. 1019 under the subheading *Personification does not prove personality*, says:

However, it is not unusual in the Scriptures for **something that is not actually a person** to be personalized or personified. **Wisdom is personified** in the book of Proverbs (1:20-33; 8:1-36); and feminine pronominal forms are used of it in the original Hebrew.

Professor James Dunn states that: “there is no clear indication that the wisdom language of these writings has gone beyond vivid personification.”

IS A PRE-HUMAN JESUS THE MASTER WORKER OF THE GENESIS CREATION?

❖ “...then **I** came to be beside him as a **master worker**, and **I** came to be the one he was especially fond of day by day” (*Verse 30*). (See NWT footnote *fosterling*).

There is no disconnection between Proverbs 8:21 and 8:22. The word *me* connects both verses. So it is still Lady Wisdom speaking and therefore, **the master worker** of verse 30 is also **her**. However, this text is obscure. The Hebrew interlinear reads:

❖ “Then I was beside him craftsman and I was delights day day one rejoicing in presences of him at all of time.”

Young's Literal renders it: “Then I am near Him a workman.”

NJB renders it: “I was beside the master craftsman, delighting him day after day.” *These show God to be the master craftsman.*

The Complete Jewish Bible renders: “I was with him as someone he could trust.”

The JPS renders: “Then I was by Him as a nursling.”

Others have “nursling” or footnote “little child.”

Catholic theologian Karl-Josef Kuschel states:

Nor is there any tradition that Lady Wisdom was ever misunderstood in Israel as a ‘real’ goddess appearing alongside Yahweh ... If we look at the texts closely, wisdom in Proverbs 8, as through-out the Hebrew Canon, is not an intermediate or middle being...

REASONS THAT JESUS IS NOT IN VIEW IN PROVERBS 8

Although, Jesus “**has become to us wisdom from God, also righteousness and sanctification...**” (1 Cor.1:30 also 1 Cor. 1:24; Col. 2:3) because he “*went on progressing in wisdom*” (Luke 1:52), this does not mean that he is in view in Proverbs 8. *The New American Commentary* volume 14 explains why 1 Corinthians 1:24 should not be used to interpret the Wisdom of Proverbs 8 as being a pre-human Jesus:

Perhaps the strongest argument for taking Prov. 8 to be an Old Testament portrait of Christ is 1Cor.1:24, where Paul calls Christ “The wisdom of God”. Close examination of the text, however, reveals that Paul’s description of Christ is not an allusion to Prov.8 and that it provides no basis for interpreting Proverbs in this way.

First, Paul’s purpose in 1 Cor. 1:24 is not to point to Old Testament texts that relate to Christ but to address the scandal of the cross. In particular he faces the issue of the offence created when he proclaims that the crucified Jesus is the Son of God and Savior of the World. To the Greeks this is sheer folly. When he says that Christ is the wisdom of God, he means it functionally in the sense that the crucified Christ is God’s profound way of salvation despite whatever human reason might think of the idea. He also calls Christ the Power of God in the same verse in response to Jews who expect the Messiah to come in overwhelming power.

Second, it is not appropriate to take Paul’s comment and make it the interpretive grid for an Old Testament text to which Paul made no allusion whatsoever. Similarly, one should not take a text that describes the power of God (e.g., Ps. 78:4 ff.) and claim that it is really a description of Christ on the basis of 1 Cor. 1:24. It would be as if one were to take 1 John 4:8 (“God is love”) and on that basis claim that 1 Cor. 13 is really intended to be read as a description of God. p. 112.

WHAT IS THE WISDOM SPOKEN OF IN PROVERBS 8?

Verse 24 says that wisdom was “...brought forth as with labour pains.” Yet God’s wisdom has always been with Him – it never came into existence. However, **the specific wisdom that is God’s creative purpose** and plan i.e. His “word” working in creation and which was produced at a particular point in ancient time was “brought forth.” Again *The New American Commentary* explains:

Finally, Woman Wisdom of Prov 8 does not personify an attribute of God but personifies an attribute of creation. She is personification of the structure, plan, or rationality that God built into the world. She is created by God and fundamentally an attribute of God’s universe. p. 113.

So because we are dealing with personification, Lady Wisdom, *as the figure of speech*, would have been born at a point in time. Nevertheless, Jesus was not “brought forth as with labour pains” until his birth from Mary. Therefore, Jesus is not in this Proverbs 8 picture of wisdom. For example just because Jesus also becomes “righteousness and sanctification” we are hardly expected to come to the conclusion that whenever we see these words in the rest of the Scriptures that it is speaking of Jesus. This, too, must be true of the word *wisdom*. The synoptic parallel accounts Luke 11:49/Matthew 23:34 show God’s wisdom is not a second person but Himself:

- ❖ “...**the wisdom of God** also said, ‘I will send forth to them prophets’” (*Luke 11:49*).
- ❖ “...here **I [God]** am sending forth to you prophets...” (*Matt. 23:34*). (*Quoted from 2 Chron. 36:15*).

JEHOVAH IS THE ACTUAL MAKER IN PROVERBS 8

Right within the Proverbs 8 passage are contained statements that Jehovah was the actual maker of the Genesis creation:

- ❖ “When as yet **He** had not *made the earth*. When **He** established the heavens. When **He** inscribed (not “decreed”) a circle on the face of the watery deep. **He** made firm the cloud masses. **He** marked out (not “decreed”) the foundations of the earth” (*Prov. 8:26, 29*).

It is the context and the proper understanding of the type of language used that help one to properly understand this section of Proverbs which is evidently not speaking of a literal person.

However, confusion arises over this subject because of four passages in the Christian Greek Scriptures. These are Colossians 1:15-18, Revelation 3:14, Hebrews 1:10-12, and 1 Corinthians 8:6. It is by a thorough examination of the contexts of these passages that it can be seen that the writers’ intentions were to speak of Jesus’ role as the agent of the new creation.

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