



*WIN Program: Witnessing in Neighborhoods*

## Advanced Class on Jehovah's Witnesses

Week Four: **Logical problem with the Michael becoming Jesus who became Michael Again**

**Did Paul think Jesus was God?**

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# Logical problem with the Michael becoming Jesus who became Michael Again

By [Matt Slick](#)

The Jehovah's Witnesses teach that Michael the Archangel became [Jesus](#), who then later returned to being Michael the Archangel. This position has logical problems--and Scriptural ones as well. First, here are quotes that show the position held by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society which says that Jesus is Michael the Archangel.

- "In the last book of the Bible, Revelation, the apostle John relates how Jesus, as Michael the archangel, defeats the Devil, (Watchtower 9/1/2011, p. 8, *The World's Secret Ruler Exposed*).
- "So Michael the archangel is Jesus in his prehuman existence. After his resurrection and return to heaven, Jesus resumed his service as Michael, the chief angel, "to the glory of God the Father." (Watchtower, 4/1/2010, p. 19, *Is Jesus the Archangel Michael?*).
- "These spirit sons of God have personality, divine qualities, and free will. They are superbly organized and have high positions in God's arrangement, the archangel being Michael (Jesus' heavenly name)." (Watchtower, 5/15/2009, p. 21 par. 2, *The Angels—Spirits for Public Service*”).
- "The angel foremost in power and authority--the chief angel--is named Michael the archangel. (Jude 9) He is none other than Jesus Christ." (Watchtower, 3/15/2007, p. 21 par. 4, *Angels—How They Affect Mankind*).

In Jehovah's Witness theology Michael the Archangel became the man Jesus, who then became Michael the Archangel again. But there's a problem. Let me explain.

Michael the Archangel is a living being who has characteristics consistent with being an angel. His "personhood" is tied up with his nature just as a human being's personhood is tied up with his nature.

## Personhood

When we speak of personhood, we are talking about the quality of self-awareness, self-identity, having a will, emotions, etc. We call this personhood. Therefore, each human being is his own person, and each angel likewise is his own person.

## Nature

If we were to take a man and cut off his arms and legs and blind him and make him deaf, is he still human? Yes, he is. This is because the essence of what makes someone human is not defined by physical attributes. There is an inner quality, an inner essence that makes a human being a human. Likewise, there is an inner quality, an inner essence that makes an angel, an angel. But the nature of an angel and the nature of a human are not the same thing. They are completely different even though they can share similar characteristics such as being self-aware, having a will, emotions, etc. Likewise, we are completely different in nature when compared to

God, yet we also share characteristics similar to Him in personhood such as self-awareness, having a will, emotions, etc.

In addition, the mind, personality, and personhood of a living, sentient being is tied to the nature of that being. So, if an angel were destroyed so as to not have existence, his personhood is also destroyed. He no longer has existence. In the case of the Jehovah's Witnesses when Michael the Archangel became a man, the angelic nature was destroyed because it was no longer in existence. After all, the Jehovah's Witnesses teach that the angel became human. But since being a human is not the same thing as being an angel, then logically the angelic nature had to cease to exist. However, the Jehovah's Witnesses say that the essence and personhood of Michael the Archangel was changed into that of a human being, and then later that same essence and personhood was changed back into an angel. How can this be since a person's identity and personhood is tied to the nature of what he is? If the nature ceases (Michael stopped being an angel), then the personhood of Michael ceased and could not become what it was not: human. Therefore, in the Jehovah's Witness theology there is a loss of continuity of the personhood between Michael the Archangel who became Jesus and who then became an angel again. Their position makes no sense, and it cannot be true.

## **Objections Answered**

According to Trinitarian theology, Jesus is God who became a man; and He became God again. Doesn't this article refute your own theology?

This objection fails to take into account the doctrine of the Hypostatic Union which says in the person of Christ are two distinct natures: God and man. So, God did not stop being God in the incarnation. Instead, there was a union of the natures in the one person. To clarify, it was not a combination as though there was a mixture the way food color might be mixed in water. The natures were distinct and separate but in unity in the person of Jesus.

# Did Paul think Jesus was God?

By [Ryan Turner](#)

The first [Christian](#) writings that we have in existence come from the Apostle Paul. Paul's first writings come from around A.D. 51 in the case of First Thessalonians or about 20 years after the death of [Jesus](#) in A.D. 30. Interestingly, Paul's views on Jesus were without precedent in the Judaism of his time.

Paul did think of Jesus as [God](#). It seems reasonable to conclude that Paul certainly had a high Christology, in which Jesus received [worship](#) and devotion, that was without clear precedent in the Judaism of the first century. From the wider context of Paul's undisputed letters, there are a number of indications of this high devotion to Jesus.[1](#)

## 1. Jesus is Yahweh

Perhaps one of the clearest indications that Paul thought Jesus was Yahweh comes from the fact that he used Monotheistic Old [Testament](#) passages which uniquely referred to Yahweh and applied them to the Lord Jesus Christ ([Romans 10:13](#) cf. [Joel 2:32](#); [1 Cor. 1:31](#) cf. [Jer. 9:24](#); [1 Cor. 2:16](#) cf. [Isa. 40:13](#); [1 Cor. 10:26](#) cf. [Ps. 24:1](#); [2 Cor. 10:17](#) cf. [Jer. 9:24](#) for just a few examples). [1 Corinthians 2:16](#), for example, alludes to [Isaiah 40:13](#) which is in the context of some of the most explicit monotheistic statements in the entire Old Testament (cf. [Isaiah 40:13-28](#); [43:10](#); [44:6, 8](#); [45:5](#)).

### 1A. [Romans 10:13](#) cf. [Joel 2:32](#)

[Romans 10:13](#), "For 'WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.'"[2](#)

[Joel 2:32](#), "'And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the LORD will be delivered; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be those who escape, as the LORD has said, even among the survivors whom the LORD calls."

Comments: The LORD reference here is to Yahweh. However, Paul takes the Lord reference in [Joel 2:32](#) and applies it to Jesus in [Romans 10:13](#).

### 1B. [1 Corinthians 1:31](#) cf. [Jeremiah 9:24](#)

[1 Corinthians 1:31](#), "So that, just as it is written, 'LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD.'"

[Jeremiah 9:24](#), "'But let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,' declares the LORD."

Comments: The Lord in [1 Corinthians 1:31](#) is a reference to Jesus, while the quotation is a reference to Yahweh.

### **1C. [1 Corinthians 2:16](#) cf. [Isaiah 40:13](#)**

[1 Corinthians 2:16](#), "For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ."

[Isaiah 40:13](#), "Who has [a]directed the Spirit of the LORD, Or as His counselor has informed Him?"

Comments: The Lord in the context of 1 Corinthians 2 is Jesus. while the Lord in [Isaiah 40:13](#) is Yahweh.

### **1D. [1 Corinthians 10:26](#); cf. [Psalm 24:1](#)**

[1 Corinthians 10:26](#), "FOR THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S, AND ALL IT CONTAINS."

[Psalm 24:1](#), "The earth is the LORD'S, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it."

Comments: The Lord in the context of 1 Corinthians 10 is Jesus, while the Lord in [Psalm 24:1](#) is Yahweh.

### **1E. [2 Corinthians 10:17](#) cf. [Jeremiah 9:24](#)**

[2 Corinthians 10:17](#), "But HE WHO BOASTS IS TO BOAST IN THE LORD."

[Jeremiah 9:24](#), "'But let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,' declares the LORD."

Comments: The Lord in the context of 2 Corinthians 10 is Jesus, while the Lord in [Jeremiah 9:24](#) is Yahweh.

## **2. Jesus Receives Prayer**

The early Christians prayed to Jesus for his return and for blessing and were even described as those who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus, which likely indicate that such prayer was a regular part of their devotional practices ([1 Cor. 1:2](#); [16:22](#); [2 Cor. 12:8](#); [Rom. 10:13](#)). [1 Corinthians 1:2](#) and [Romans 10:13](#) even draw upon an Old Testament passage referring to Yahweh, which was the unique Hebrew name for God, and apply them to Jesus.

## **3. Jesus Receives Hymns**

They also composed hymns describing Jesus as pre-existent and active in the themes of creation, redemption, and end-time salvation ([Phil. 2:6-11](#)). Only God was the Creator, and for Jesus to

share in that action indicates that He could be uniquely viewed as sharing in God's identity or being God Himself. Likewise, the fact that Paul thought of Jesus as pre-existent indicates that he certainly had some view of the incarnation or Jesus' coming to earth as a human (cf. [2 Cor. 8:8-9](#); [Phil. 2:6-11](#)).

#### 4. Jesus is Pre-Existent

As briefly mentioned, Paul did have a conception of Jesus being pre-existent (cf. [Rom. 8:3](#); [1 Cor. 8:6](#); [10:4](#); [15:47](#); [2 Cor. 8:9](#); [Gal. 4:4](#)). This would be totally consistent with the idea of Jesus being incarnated as a human.

- [Romans 8:3](#), "For what the Law 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."
- [1 Corinthians 8:6](#), "Yet for us 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."
- [1 Corinthians 10:4](#), "And all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ."
- [1 Corinthians 15:47](#), "The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven."
- [2 Corinthians 8:9](#), "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich."
- [Galatians 4:4](#), "But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law."

#### 5. Jesus is Creator

Paul also described Jesus as Creator, "Yet for us 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." ([1 Cor. 8:6](#)). [Isaiah 44:24](#) says, "Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, and the one who formed you from the womb, 'I, the LORD, am the maker of all things, Stretching out the heavens *by Myself* And spreading out the earth *all alone*.'" In this passage the LORD [Hebrew Yahweh] says that he created the earth all by Himself. However, Paul says that Jesus created all things. Therefore, in some sense Jesus must be God. It is also important to note that Paul was very familiar with this [Isaiah 44:24](#) passage due to his knowledge of the surrounding context in Isaiah 40-44 in his numerous other allusions to Isaiah ([1 Cor. 2:16](#) cf. [Isa. 40:13](#)).

#### 6. Other Indications

There are also a number of other strong indications that the early Christians, such as Paul, viewed Jesus as God. First, these early Christians composed creedal statements in which Jesus was their object ([Rom. 1:3-4](#); [10:9-10](#)). Second, they described their worship services as gathering in the Lord's name ([1 Cor. 5:4](#)). Third, they baptized new converts in Jesus' name

([Rom. 6:3](#); [Gal. 3:27](#)). Fourth, they celebrated a sacred meal which they called the “Lord’s Supper” ([1 Cor. 11:20](#); cf. [10:21](#)).

There is virtually no other comparable example in all of the Jewish literature of the time period to indicate that any figure, semi-divine being, or anyone received this type of devotion other than God. Therefore, it seems wise to conclude as David Capes does, “These practices imply that early Christians worshiped Jesus and thought of him in the way that one thinks of God.”<sup>3</sup>

## 7. When Did Paul Think Jesus was God?

An important question arises once we consider the fact that Paul thought of Jesus as God. When did this belief in Jesus as God first emerge? Perhaps the earliest examples that we see of this belief in Jesus as God comes from [Philippians 2:5-11](#) which is likely a pre-Pauline hymn. Philippians was written around A.D. 60. Since the hymn pre-dates the writing of Philippians, we could speculate that the hymn was composed in the 50s or perhaps even in the 40s. However, the beliefs upon which the hymn are based would date even earlier. This would essentially push the belief in Jesus' deity to sometime perhaps in the 30s or 40s. However, considering the fact that Paul took for granted his audience's belief in Jesus' Deity, it is quite possible that these early Christians believed Jesus to be divine from the beginning.

Likewise, it is interesting to note that Paul visits Jerusalem in Galatians 1-2, and we have no record of the earliest apostles contradicting or disputing Paul's high views of Jesus. Therefore, it seems reasonable to argue that there never was a time when the earliest Christians did not have a highly exalted view of Jesus in which He could be described in ways only reserved for God.

## 8. What does this mean?

It is interesting to note that even in the earliest Christian writings that we have, Jesus is already receiving a type of devotion that was without precedent in the Judaism of the time period. This early Jesus devotion was radically and explosively sudden. Some scholars have argued that essentially there never was a time when Jesus was not worshipped as [Deity](#) and the crucified and resurrected Lord. The idea of Jesus being pre-existent and becoming incarnate as a human or the idea of Jesus being God was not something that took years to develop and was somehow concocted by the apostle John in the late first century. Rather, even the earliest Christian writings contain a highly exalted view of Jesus where He can be seen as God. Finally, even more, it is highly unlikely that this notion of Jesus being divine was somehow borrowed from pagan mythology or Greco-Roman religions since this belief is extremely early.

- [1](#). It is interesting to note that Paul never systematically defends his views of Jesus (Christology). He takes his devotion and belief in the [divinity](#) of Jesus for granted in the Churches to which he writes.
- [2](#). In many modern translations, when a New Testament author is quoting from the Old Testament, the Old Testament text is in CAPS.
- [3](#). David Capes, *Old Testament Yahweh Texts in Paul's Christology*.