

We are speaking about our first subject, the preexistence of Jesus Christ. We talked about His position over all creation. He is the revelation of the invisible God. He is the complete representation of the invisible God. He is the special reason for the creation. He is the firstborn, which does not mean that He was born first. It is not the standpoint of time as is clear in the Bible. But *prototokos* is used nine times as referring to His uniqueness, or His specialness. The fact is that all creation was designed for Him. He is above it all. We talked about His power to create all things. “All things were made by Him. Without Him was not anything made that was made.” We talked about His providence in controlling everything. “He upholds all things by the word of His power” Hebrews 1:3. He is sustaining all the laws of the universe (Colossians 1:17).

We have now come to His presence in Old Testament times. We talked a lot about the importance of the word “name.” His name is above every name. We mentioned that even though you will see in books, the names of God (like *Jehovah Rapha* or *El Shaddai*), these are not really names like we use that word in English. They are not really titles. They speak of the character and attributes and activity of God. God said His name was *Yahweh* or the Tetragrammaton (four letters that express who God is). There are many qualities and attributes of Him. The word name is used 800 times in the Old Testament, and 200 in the New. It never occurs in the plural, but is always in the singular. We are going to talk about the fact that *Yeshua ben Josef* (Jesus son of Joseph), who came into this world as a baby in Bethlehem, had always existed. He did not begin His existence when He became a baby in Bethlehem, or when He was conceived in the womb of Mary. He is the eternal Son of God and we are going to look into that wonderful teaching in the *Tenach* (the Old Testament) today. I hope it will be a blessing to you.

Take your Bibles and turn to Psalm 34. In dealing with the presence of the Messiah in the Old Testament, we are going to deal with four things. There is evidence that God is more than one (he exists as Father, Son and Spirit). We are going to look at, first of all, a wonderful subject, the Angel of the Lord. The Hebrew term is *Malach Yahweh*. Now *malach* can also be translated messenger.

Watch out when you read “angel” that your mind does not immediately go to somebody that looks more like a woman than a man, has wings, and looks rather sweet and angelic. Not that they could not look that way, but I just doubt seriously that they do. They are not women. They are sexless, but I do not want to make a big deal over that. A lot of people sure do. They definitely are not like those cute little cherubs that we have all over our Victorian houses. But, you know, those are cute too. Let us not ruin everybody’s life.

Anyway, we are going to talk about the Angel of the Lord. A *malach* is simply a messenger—one who is sent on a mission. It is interesting if you put it into Greek, you would get *apostolō*, which you have the word “to send” or “apostle” in English. It is just said from the word. An apostle is one who is sent. In some respects it can be an angel, or, in other words, a messenger. Is there a unique group of beings that God has created whom we normally refer to as angels? Yes, of course. Cherubim, seraphim, and some of the ranks and orders of those angels. There is one angel mentioned as the archangel. That is Michael the Archangel. No, that is not Jesus Christ in case you have heard a lot of Jehovah’s Witness talk. Michael bows the knee to Jesus Christ. There is a book in secular bookstores that, oh its beautiful, which talks about the seven angels of God. It is really gorgeous, and they are all named there. Excuse me. There are a lot more angels. It says the seven archangels. That comes from Jewish Talmudic literature. There is only one archangel

according to the Bible. Some of the fantasy teaching that is in the Talmud as well as in other writings, comes up with more archangels. They think that Gabriel, meaning strength of God, is an archangel. The Bible never says he is. Michael is called the archangel, which pretty well settles it. He is not an, or one of, he is the archangel. There is the angel also over the demons as well, and his name is Satan.

In looking at this, I was down at Mother's Kitchen in Newport Beach, which is a health and nutritional type place. It is kind of a little occultic and New Age too. I came in and there was this gigantic display of angels right in the doorway. There was a big sign and all these cute little cherubs around. There were books all over the place on angels, and featuring was this beautiful multi-colored, Seven Archangels of God. So I opened it up and I looked at it and so forth. I told the attendant at the counter, "Is the manager available."

She said, "Why?"

I said, "There is a really big problem over here at this table."

So the manager came out, and he said, "What's the problem?"

I said, "This book, it's not right."

He said, "It's not right?"

I said, "No. It says there are seven archangels. There is only one. They've got seven in here."

Here, look for yourself.”

He looked at me and thought, “What’s going on?”

And I said, “Besides, the best book on angels you don’t even have here.”

He said, “Really? What one’s that?”

“A book by Billy Graham. Ever heard of him? He wrote on angels. You need that book here. I’d put it right in the center if I were you. Kind of feature it. By the way, he has a lot of other good books too. He has a little simple one called, *Peace with God*. We all need peace, don’t we?”

“Well, yeah.” Now, he is realizing, “I have a real serious weirdo here.”

Well there are not seven archangels. There is only one, and Jesus is not an angel. The cults are going to use what I am now going to teach you in exactly the opposite way to prove that He is nothing but an exalted angel of God. That is how they do it.

In Psalm 34:7, just to show you some of the blessing of this, it says, “the angel (the *hamalach*) of the Lord (*Yahweh*) encampeth round about them that fear Him and delivereth him (or them).” We have one angel called the Angel of the Lord encamping around everybody who fears Him, because He uses the plural. He delivers them. So whoever this one angel is, He is either moving real quick from person to person, or He has the ability to be in more places at once than anyone else can be.

In Psalm 35:5-6 it says, “Let them be as chaff [talking about the wicked] before the wind and let the Angel of the Lord chase them. Let their way be dark and slippery and let the Angel of the Lord persecute them.” Why would David be referring to that? Because in past Jewish history, before David’s time, there is biblical record about the power and greatness of the Angel of the Lord.

Turn to Zechariah, to see how one of the later prophets proves that the Bible is consistent on this subject. In 12:8 it says, “In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem.” This is talking about the Battle of Armeggedon. “In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David. And the house of God shall be as God as the Angel of the Lord before them.” You see, that phrase will remind the Jews how the Angel of the Lord led them, even in the wilderness. How he fought for them. How he defeated their enemies, and now at the Battle of Armeggedon the prayer is, or the statement is that the Lord will defend them. Even the most feeble Jew is going to be like the Angel of the Lord. They will be supernaturally empowered to defend themselves against all the attacks against them. All the nations will be against them. In fact, verse 9 says that God will destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

The Angel of the Lord appears fifty-nine times, however, the actual Hebrew words *malach Yahweh* appear only fifty-seven of those times. I know it is two times to quibble about. You also have the term the Angel of God appearing six times.

Now, we are going to give you seven examples, and hopefully these examples will demonstrate to you who the *Malach Yahweh* (the Angel of the Lord) really is. Let us go first of all to Abraham in

Genesis 22. Believe me, folks, you need to get this material down. The cultists will really do a number against people with all these passages showing that Jesus is not what we say He is.

In Genesis 22:11, Abraham is ready to stretch forth his hand and kill his son, Isaac. You say, “How can he do that?” Because Hebrews 11 tells us that the promise of God was through Isaac and Abraham had believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness, he actually believed that God, if he wanted to kill him, would raise him immediately from the dead. He knew that, because he did not have any baby yet, so he knew that according to God’s promise Isaac would also have a son. He knew that God would have to raise him from the dead. He was willing to kill that boy. It shows a great faith of Abraham who said that he did not waver through unbelief but grew strong in the promise of God. He was fully persuaded that what God had promised, He would perform. Hebrews 11 points out that it was all a type and a picture of the death and resurrection of our Savior.

But anyway, in Genesis 22:11, it mentions the Angel of the Lord. Now many times it says, “an angel.” It is not significant in Greek as it is in Hebrew. Let me explain. This is not referring always to a definite article, but it does in this context. I will show you why. In Greek, if I said, “THE Angel of the Lord,” it does not necessarily mean that he is the only one. He could be the angel that we are talking about out of a group of angels. The definite article in Greek specifies or identifies that noun. In Greek it is not as significant. That is why many times it is just a normal angel when it says the angel of the Lord opened the door and Peter went out and so forth.

In the Old Testament, when you put the definite article in front of it, it is the one and only one Angel of the Lord. If it says just an angel or it uses the plural, then you know it is another one of the created beings. The definite article is a very important point.

And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here [am] I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only [son] from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind [him] a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said [to] this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen. (Genesis 22:11-14)

The Lamb was provided for our sins. Anyway, now look at 22:15.

And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time. (Genesis 22:15)

Do not miss this text and the details of it. The Angel of the Lord did the calling. It was the second time, which means, the first one we read was the Angel of the Lord.

And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand

which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate  
of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth  
be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice. (Genesis 22:16)

Who is this one? First of all, only one according to the Bible, can swear by himself. There is a beautiful argument on that in Hebrews 6:13-20 (about the promise of God). He does not need to swear by anything else, because there is not anything else. By an *a priori* argument, He is the Creator. He swore by Himself, and so His own character that He will not change, and His word says, “I change not,” Malachi 3:6. What you have here is a powerful statement to the deity of the Angel of the Lord. He is actually claiming to be *Yahweh*. “By Myself I have sworn, saith *Yahweh*. “And you have not withheld your son and you have obeyed My voice.” This is an incredible testimony to the identity of the *Malach Yahweh*. The Angel of the Lord is the messenger that God the Father would send into this world. He was working actively in Old Testament times long before He became a baby in Bethlehem.

Let us now go to the case of Moses in Exodus 3. If you are Jewish, then there are a couple of heavy duty names that you just do not treat lightly ever (Abraham, King David, and Moses). Moses was a great law giver. We do not fool around with Moses. Moses was the one God used to give us the *Torah*, which is basically, or uniquely, the first five books of the Bible, but can also refer to the entire *Tenach*. It can also refer to just the Ten Commandments. It has a lot of applications. *Torah* can refer to any commandment. I think this is stretching it a bit, but if you were raised in a Jewish home and your mother did not like what you were doing and she wanted to do something else, she would shout at you, “It’s a mitzvah!” The word mitzvah means commandment. So, you see what she wants to do is put a little authority behind what she is

asking you to do. She knows it is not in the Bible. She does not have a verse to prove her point, but it is a mitzvah. That means you do what your momma wants.

What we have here, in fact, is the authority of God Himself coming out through this Angel of the Lord. To Moses He is the author of the *Torah*, the first five books which continually tell us about *Yahweh*'s voice, speaking, commanding, telling us things. When you read something out of that life of Moses, it carries a certain impact to a Jewish heart that is not always that obvious to some of us. In Exodus 3:1, we learn that Moses, after he fled Egypt, kept the flock of Jethro (his father-in-law and the priest of Midian). He led the flock to the back side of the desert, came to the Mountain of God, and even to Horeb. How could Moses lead the children of Israel out of Egypt and come right to Mount Sinai? Because he had been there before. He had spent 40 years on the back side of the desert. He knew it like the back of his hand, and it was no problem at all. I can see Moses in the desert yelling at them, "No, not that way. Over here. I've been here before. Follow me." Now, I may have added a little to the word of God there, but we do know that when Moses complained to God that is exactly what he said. "These people, they are so rebellious. They don't follow me. They don't do what I tell them." I can see him chasing down sheep and goats and putting them away. "We have to go through that little crevice right over there. I know what I'm doing. Follow me now." It was really frustrating, but he had been there before. He knew the area quite well, because something happened at the foot of that mountain that changed his life.

He was a talented, and very eloquent speaker, though he tried to tell God that he was not, which was kind of stupid. He was trained in all the educational advantages of ancient Egypt (Acts 7:22 tells us that). He knew all their wisdom and could speak eloquently, but when he started to complain to God he said, "Oh I am slow of speech and tongue." That is when God "got ticked" (My translation). God really became upset with him for that one. "Who do you think I am? Do I

not know whether you can speak or not?” God was so mad at him that he judged him and told him that Aaron would do all talking. I feel sorry for Aaron, because he never really came up with anything original in his life. The poor guy. Can you imagine going into Pharaoh? God would not let Moses talk directly to Pharaoh. Moses always had to tell Aaron what to say to Pharaoh.

“Tell Pharaoh, ‘Let my people go.’”

Aaron says, “Let my people go.”

Pharaoh says, “I am not going to do that.”

He turns to Moses, “I’m not....”

Can you not see how this would irritate Moses a little? “I heard it. I heard it.” It was God’s little judgment on him. He was not allowed to talk to Pharaoh because he lied to God.

Anyway, one of the greatest things that ever happened in his life, was this event at the foot of Mount Horeb.

And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire  
out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush  
burned with fire, and the bush [was] not consumed. (Exodus 3:2)

Right away you notice something very interesting here. The devouring fire is God’s way of demonstrating His presence. The pillar of fire. “Our God is a consuming fire,” the Bible says. He

is not merely fire, but He can appear in a flame of fire. Now it came “out of the midst of a bush: and he looked and behold the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.” That was pretty unusual. I like what one writer who has surveyed that area archaeologically said, “It was a miracle he found a bush.” Now I have also been through that area, and Sinai is even desolate of sagebrush. It is one of the most barren deserts in the entire world. The fact that there was a bush, was unusual. The bush was on fire. Moses was probably just a little upset about that because the bush was probably one of the few things he could have used to get a little relief from the heat of the sun and here, it is on fire. Anyway, he turns to see why the bush is not burned.

Exodus 3:4 says, “When the Lord saw....” Wait a minute. The Angel of the Lord appeared, but in verse 4 it says:

And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called  
unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses.  
And he said, Here [am] I. (Exodus 3:4)

People say, “Oh come on, he’s talking to a bush?” If a voice came out of a bush that was on fire and talked to you, I think that you would listen. You would probably freeze and panic.

And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy  
feet, for the place whereon thou standest [is] holy ground.  
(Exodus 3:5)

God said the same thing to Joshua as you can find in Joshua 5. Again it was the Captain of the Host of the Lord, the Angel of the Lord that appeared to Joshua and told him to “take your shoes

off. The place where you are standing is holy ground.” And it was the Lord Yahweh who spoke to Joshua. Only it was the Angel of the Lord or the Captain of the Lord of Hosts. I did not even put that one down here. There are a lot of interesting things concerning this.

Moreover he said, I [am] the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God. (Exodus 3:6)

You have to perform some sort of spiritual gymnastics to get out of the problem of this text. The Angel of the Lord is called *Yahweh* who turns aside, or calls to him. He is called God. He tells him to take off your shoes for the place where you are standing is holy ground.

There is a little chorus that I like which was written on this little fact about taking your shoes off, “because the place you are standing is holy ground.” It goes like this:

This is holy ground  
We're standing on holy ground,  
For the Lord is present and where He is is holy,  
This is holy ground  
We're standing on holy ground,  
For the Lord is present and where He is is holy,

Go to Exodus 14. This is at the time they got out of Egypt and the Lord fought for them and defeated the armies of the Egyptians. Here is one of those six usages of the Angel of God.

And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them. (Exodus 14:19)

Remember in Zechariah, the Battle of Armageddon, they said that God will make those people Jews like the Angel of God who went before them. What is it referring to? The fact that who led them through the wilderness? It was not just Moses, and certainly after he got out of Mount Horeb he needed help. The Angel of God led them.

Here it says, “And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them.” That pillar of cloud, that pillar of fire is described as being the glory of Yahweh in Exodus 40. The last chapter says:

Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys: But if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of the LORD was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys. (Exodus 40:34-38)

It is obvious, the Angel of the Lord, according to Exodus 14:19, is the one who went before them, who was in that pillar of cloud, yet according to Exodus 40 it was the glory of Yahweh that was in that pillar of cloud. The uniqueness of the Angel of the Lord is one of the prominent reasons why we speak of the preexistence of Jesus Christ.

Look at the case of Balaam, and turn to Numbers 22. Balaam was a prophet of God and he found out that it does not pay to compromise. He was being pressured by the king of Moab to curse Israel, but he finds out that God is in control, even of his own mouth. He has an experience with a donkey, where the donkey turns around and talks to him. Now that will shake you up a bit. When I read that story I like to say, “Hey, if God used Balaam’s ass, He can use you.” God can use anybody He wants anytime He wants. Do not think too highly of yourself.

And God's anger was kindled because he went: and the angel of the LORD stood in the way for an adversary against him. Now he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants were with him. And the ass saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and the ass turned aside out of the way, and went into the field: and Balaam smote the ass, to turn her into the way. But the angel of the LORD stood in a path of the vineyards, a wall being on this side, and a wall on that side. And when the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she thrust herself unto the wall, and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall: and he smote her again. And the angel of the LORD went further, and stood in a narrow place, where was no way to turn either to the

right hand or to the left. And when the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she fell down under Balaam: and Balaam's anger was kindled, and he smote the ass with a staff. And the LORD opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times? And Balaam said unto the ass, Because thou hast mocked me: I would there were a sword in mine hand, for now would I kill thee. And the ass said unto Balaam, Am not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine unto this day? was I ever wont to do so unto thee? And he said, Nay. Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face. And the angel of the LORD said unto him, Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? behold, I went out to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse before me: And the ass saw me, and turned from me these three times: unless she had turned from me, surely now also I had slain thee, and saved her alive. And Balaam said unto the angel of the LORD, I have sinned; for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me: now therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again. And the angel of the LORD said unto Balaam, Go with the men: but only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak. So Balaam went with the princes of Balak. (Numbers 22:22-35)

Again in the story, as you continue to read, God will tell him what to speak. Numbers 23:5 says that the Lord put a word in Balaam's mouth. The point is that the Angel of the Lord is identified also as the Lord in that story.

Turn to Judges 2. Is anybody getting the idea that He might have existed before He was a baby in Bethlehem? This is a book that says, "Every man did what was right in his own eyes." We can call this chapter America chapter 2. Judges is a wonderful book, and there are a lot of great lessons in this book. To Gideon, as well as to the children of Israel, we see the message of the Angel of the Lord.

In Judges 2, to the Children of Israel, it says, "An angel of the Lord came up." It is not real clear, but look at what he said, "I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swore unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you" and so forth. Then Judges 2:4 says, "It came to pass when the Angel of the Lord spake these words people not only wept, they sacrificed unto the Lord."

That is a clear passage, but turn over to Judges 6, which is the case of Gideon. In Judges 6:11 says, "an angel of the Lord," but Judges 6:12 says, "the Angel of the Lord." Gideon's response to this person was, "Oh my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why is this fallen?" (Why did the Lord bring us up?). Judges 6:14 says, and "Yahweh looked upon him." That is really amazing.

"The Angel of God" is mentioned in Judges 6:20, which is another usage of those six times of the Angel of God. "The Angel of the Lord" is used twice in Judges 6:21.

And when Gideon perceived that he [was] an angel of the LORD, Gideon said, Alas, O Lord GOD! for because I have seen an angel of the LORD face to face. And the LORD said unto him, Peace [be] unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die. Then Gideon built an altar there unto the LORD, and called it Jehovahshalom: unto this day it [is] yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites. (Judges 6:22-24)

That is interesting. How many times you can see this? Flip over to Judges 13, which is about the parents of Samson. Manoah and his wife, who was barren, had no children.

And the angel of the LORD appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou [art] barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son. (Judges 13:3)

Then the woman came and told her husband, saying, A man of God came unto me, and his countenance was like the countenance of an angel of God, very terrible: but I asked him not whence he was, neither told he me his name. (Judges 13:6)

How would she know? Whatever it was, it really impressed her.

And God hearkened to the voice of Manoah; and the angel of God came again unto the woman as she sat in the field: but Manoah her husband was not with her. (Judges 13:9)

Some people say that God and the angel of God are two different people here. Well keep going.

And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah, Of all that I said unto the woman let her beware. (Judges 13:13)

And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, I pray thee, let us detain thee, until we shall have made ready a kid for thee.

(Judges 13:15)

They were saying, “We’d really like to talk some more with you.”

And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah, Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread: and if thou wilt offer a burnt offering, thou must offer it unto the LORD. For Manoah knew not that he was an angel of the LORD. And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, What is thy name, that when thy sayings come to pass we may do thee honour? And the angel of the LORD said unto him, Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret? (Judges 13:16-18)

The word “wonderful” in Hebrew means “incomprehensible”—you cannot understand His name, says Isaiah 9:6, because it is wonderful. The story is not over.

And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God. (Judges 13:22)

The Angel of the Lord is identified as being both Yahweh and Elohim, both Lord and God in the Old Testament. It is the Angel of the Lord that appeared to Hagar. We never even looked at that one, back in Genesis 16. It, too, is a very clear reference. The Angel of the Lord found her and said, “I will multiply thy seed.” The Lord gave that message to her. You will bear a son, and his name shall be Ishmael because the Lord hath heard thy affliction. She called the name of the Lord that spoke with her, “Thou God seest me.” Wow. The Angel of the Lord is called God there as well.

Was Jesus in existence before He became a baby in Bethlehem? If you are not sure about that, then you will definitely miss that section on the test.

[[This editorial break represents a fifteen-minute intermission.]]

We are looking at the uniqueness of the Angel of the Lord in our discussion of the preexistence of Jesus Christ. So far we have been proving that this messenger (the Angel of the Lord) is in fact *Yahweh*. Now we have not yet really proven that it is Jesus.

Turn to Malachi 3. Now this is a very messianic passage. In fact, in many of the commentaries on the Passover you will find that this passage is mentioned because at Passover Jewish people would go to the door to see if Elijah is there—it is based on him and he is known as the messenger. The word is *malach* and is the same word that is translated as “angel.” Now in this particular verse we have a second *malach*.

“Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me” (Malachi 3:1). Now Malachi 4:5 picks up with the same thing. “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of *Yahweh*.” We know (and all Jews agree as well as the Christians) that this messenger is Elijah the prophet. Interestingly, it is also applied to John the Baptist. A lot of people use this as an attack against the Bible’s accuracy, because they do not really understanding what Jesus said, “If you would have repented at the preaching of John the Baptist and this is Elijah.” That is a true statement even if Christ was talking about me, but none of the criticizers have ever figured it out. For example, God could say, “If you would repent at the preaching of David then this is Elijah.” Anybody who is turning the hearts of the people back to the Lord and the hearts of the fathers back to the children is coming in the spirit and power of Elijah.

Now in the technical sense, it was also possible in terms of the credentials of the Messiah and accepting Him, that if the nation had not rejected Him, but had received Him, then John the Baptist would have been the fulfillment of Elijah the prophet coming back. First of all, is Elijah going to come back? Absolutely. Is he still going to come back? Are Jews right at Passover to picture that in their Passover celebration? Absolutely. Elijah is still going to come back. Now I happen to believe that he is one of the two witnesses in Revelation 11. The other one being Moses. A lot of people think that the two witnesses are going to be Enoch and Elijah, but Moses and Elijah make the most sense from a Jewish point of view. Elijah is to come back before the coming of that great and terrible day of the Lord, the Battle of Armageddon, to set up the kingdom.

Now, is it not possible that John the Baptist could have been an appearance of Elijah the prophet? Sure, it is possible. Why is it possible? What makes us so sure that Elijah the prophet who died

and now is spirit could not come and inhabit the body of John the Baptist? Now, I know this sounds really weird, but let me just stretch it a little further. Remember at the Resurrection there were two men in white apparel? Is it not possible, since Zechariah's prophecy said that these two who would be connected to the messianic hope are two anointed ones that stand before the Lord of glory? Is it not possible that the two men in white apparel were Moses and Elijah?

Let me put it another way. Who was on the Mount of Transfiguration? I think it was Mount Hermon where it happened. In Matthew 17 it says that two guys appeared with Jesus and they were even recognized. Either they had signs saying, "hello, my name is Moses," so Peter, James and John would know. The other guy had one too, saying, "hello, my name is Elijah." Or they could have told who they were by the length of their beards. They must have done something. The Lord could have said, "Here is Moses and Elijah." I do not know how they knew, but it says that they knew it was Moses and Elijah. Peter was so ballistic that he wanted to build three tabernacles for them. Now God does not share His glory with anyone, and so Peter's proposal was rejected. Who appeared? Moses and Elijah. Quit trying to battle with these people that try to trick you on this passage. Now Moses' body was in the grave awaiting the resurrection. Knowing this, is it possible for a spirit to come back and appear as a human being? Absolutely. It has happened many times and will happen again. Remember the angels are spirit beings and they can appear as men. Remember the devil and all the demons are spirit beings, and they can transform themselves into ministers of righteousness and teachers and prophets who are false. Do not let people use this argument against you, because it was very possible that Elijah could have inhabited the body of John the Baptist. Now, because they rejected him, this was not the case. Is Elijah still coming? Yes. He will appear. He is still coming.

What about the ascension? Jesus ascended to heaven as the Bible declares and two men in white apparel were there, telling the disciples, “Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven. This same Jesus will return in the same fashion” (Acts 1:9-11). Again, the messianic connection is very powerful as they appear again. Maybe it is the same two men appearing in every instance. Is it not a possibility that your Sunday school story was wrong. Is it possible? Would you just grant the probability of it? My goal is not for you to become dogmatic, but to think more critically.

Now, let us keep reading. The first one, Elijah, or John the Baptist, is the one who will prepare the way of the Lord. Isaiah 40 talks about that.

The next statement is, “And the Lord, *Yahweh*” It is not *Adonai* or is it? This becomes a great battle. I was talking to one of the gentlemen in the break here about the Jewish people growing up with a feeling that it is not *Malach Yahweh*, but *Malach Adonai*—“The messenger of the Lord.” They see *Adonai* is an earthly lord and Jehovah Witnesses like to capitalize on this. There was a JW teacher, who is now a Fundamentalist Baptist pastor, and he and I argued for two years until he came to believe that *Yeshua* is who He claimed. He used this verse all the time to prove his case. The first Lord is *Adonai*, but watch this carefully, “And the Lord, *Adonai*, when ye seek.”

Let me ask you a question. Do you believe that Jesus is an earthly lord? Let me put it another way. Do you think that He is going to be Lord of anything—ruling on the earth? Of course. He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. So, what is the problem here? It is not a problem that He is called an earthly lord, but that He called *Yahweh*?

Now watch this. “And Adonai whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger [*malach*, angel], of the covenant whom ye delight in. Behold He shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts, Yahweh. But who may abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appeareth? He is like a refiner’s fire and like fuller’s soap. He will sit as a refining and purifying of silver. He shall purify the sons of Levi and purge them as gold and silver that they may offer unto Yahweh an offering in righteousness.”

I like to tell people that they cannot have their ice cream *and* cake too concerning this. Here is the point. No one that I know of, whether he be a JW, a Jewish teacher, a Protestant minister, a Roman Catholic, or anyone else, believes that the words of verse 2 are not speaking of *Yahweh*. “Who can stand before Him?” In fact, this statement is used several times in the Bible, including Psalm 130: “If He marks iniquities, who can stand in front of Him? Who is the purifier? Who is the refiner?” It is *Yahweh*—the Lord God and He is the only one who does that.

Now you see, they love to make a little switch here on you. But do not let them get away with it. We are talking about the one who is coming and He is called *Adonai* whom ye seek, *Malach* the messenger, the angel of the covenant. He is going to come and who can abide His coming? Who will stand when He appears? He is like the refiner’s fire. He will purify the sons of Levi. So you understand, this *Adonai*, *malach*, this messenger is in fact, the same as the one who will do all the refining and purifying. Therefore we have a difficult statement.

But we are not even done there. In verse 6, He continues speaking and says, “For I am the...” What? “Lord.” And here it is the word *Yahweh*. I am sorry, Jehovah’s Witnesses; I am Sorry my Jewish rabbinical friends. The one who is coming is declared to be *Yahweh*. “I change not.” This is the passage that we use to prove the immutability of God—the attribute that He never changes.

We all change, but God never changes. Yet, in this context it is a reference to *Yeshua*. Yet this should have been known already because Hebrews states, “He is the same yesterday, today and forever.” He is the unchangeable *ha Masheach* (Messiah).

By the way, we do not have to worry about this not being a reference to Jesus, because it is actually used in the Bible for Him in the Book of Revelation. We know that we are on good ground here. Even excluding the New Testament evidence, we have clear statements here that this angel of the covenant of God’s promise, is in fact an *Adonai* (an earthly lord), one who is coming, who will purify and cleanse, and this one is *Yahweh*—the one who never changes. Hallelujah!

Now, if you think that that one teaches the preexistence, look at the understanding of the Lord of Hosts. You cannot know how many times I have argued this point with Jehovah’s Witnesses. It is almost a lost cause because their minds become so blind. I have learned through the years to skip the arguments and go for the penetrating questions. Rather than let them control the conversation, I like to ask the questions. Besides, it is more Jewish that way. So, ask the questions. One of the questions is, “Do you know that phrase the Lord of Hosts? Is the word ‘Lord’ *Adonai* or *Yahweh*?” You see, by asking this question we cut out all the middle ground discussion along with all the little gymnastics to try and prove that it is only *Adonai*, an earthly lord because it says “Lord of Hosts,” which means armies. And So it is an earthly lord.

Then, you would expect to see *Adonai* and not *Yahweh*. But in fact, it is the exact opposite. Now the Lord of Hosts is used 236 times. And so to look up every occurrence would be a great study but we do not have the time for that here. This is what I want you to know. There are four things about the Lord of Hosts. When you get these down, you can answer any cultist at your door.

1. This Lord of Hosts is the redeemer, which we will prove shortly.
2. He is the king.
3. He is the God of the armies of Israel.
4. He is the commander of the army of the Lord.

Let us go to Isaiah chapter 44, verse 6. And so, you will be able to answer the following question: “How does the Bible use the term, ‘the Lord of Hosts’? To what is He likened?” The answer is four-fold: redeemer, king, God, and commander. Although I do not always require this, one of the practices that I would get involved with if I were you is to connect at least one passage with the point that you are trying to get down. Make this a part of your system, so that if somebody comes up to you and debates the subject, you know the point well. You can respond, “Yes, He’s the redeemer” and rattle off, Isaiah 44:6. So I try, when I put this together, to make it a part of my life and connect those verses. That is very important when you are talking to somebody to turn immediately to the passage. So, if you want to prove the redeemer is *Yahweh* of armies, you already have one verse to prove it (Isaiah 44:6). “Thus saith the Lord”—that is the word *Yahweh* in Hebrew, who is the King of Israel. This way, Everybody is in agreement; Jehovah’s Witnesses are in agreement; Jews are in agreement. Yes, *Yahweh* is the King of Israel and His redeemer. Right away that is *ha Masheach*. We know that He is the Messiah—the Redeemer—the One who will save us. We understand that, and it says that His redeemer [is] the Lord of Hosts. I cannot tell you how many Jehovah’s Witnesses say that there are two words for Lord. One is *Yahweh* and one is *Adonai*, and everybody who does not know, always says, “Oh I see,” as if it is something new to them. Now they never really told you if it was *Adonai* in the text because it is not. It is the word *Yahweh* both times—there are two occurrences of *Yahweh* in the same verse.

Let me tell you what verse the Jehovah's Witnesses are going to quote to you: Psalm 110:1. Here David said that the Lord (*Yahweh*) said unto my Lord (*Adonai*) sit here at my right hand. They quote and show you that in the New Testament, that is quoted of Jesus. "You see," they say, "Jesus is nothing but an earthly Lord." But they get away with it because nobody stops them and says, "Oh then He is always *Adonai*, and never *Yahweh*." They will politely say, "We are not trying to be offensive, but the Messiah is never called *Yahweh* in the Old Testament." And because you memorized references with your points, you say, "Then please explain to me this problem in Isaiah 44:6. We have two occurrences of *Yahweh* here. In fact the very term you said was the Messiah, the redeemer, is in fact, called *Yahweh* of armies—the Lord of Hosts. How do you get out of that?" Most of them I have talked to are not very knowledgeable and they are only knowledgeable according to the training that they have received. Just like you, when you go out witnessing, you often just memorize what somebody told you, rather than really know it yourself. So, they do not really know that verse and so they usually say, (the classic answer): "What translation are you reading from?" See now, they are taught to do this because they can get on the translation problem and they have got you away from the situation. And I always say, "Well, let's just do it in Hebrew." They're response, "Ah, I think I've got to go."

The next thing I always ask the Jehovah's Witnesses is, "Why don't you lead us in a word of prayer before you go?" See in their training, they are told never to pray in front of you, because you are not a Jehovah's Witness. You are a pagan to them—an abomination to God. They always answer, "We'd rather not." Ask them, "Oh, I thought you people were religious." They will hesitate and you can say, "You mean you don't care enough for me to pray for me? Why don't you pray for me that I'd become a Jehovah's Witness? I don't understand. I mean, you should pray right now. If you don't pray for me then you're a liar, a deceiver, a hypocrite and I want you out of my house."

Now there are different ways to witness, of course. Perhaps you would prefer my wife's method which is to serve cookies and coffee and then to act sweet. This was the way that we got them in the house in the first place. It works best if you use both methods.

In Isaiah 6, we read the great vision of Isaiah. "I saw the Lord." Boy, that is a great one! I love that passage. "The year that King Uzziah died." He was a leper the last sixteen years of his life and had to shout to people, "Unclean!" That will help you understand this vision better. He was a good man. Jotham, his son, reigned as a co-regent with him for about sixteen years. When King Uzziah died it was a critical moment in Israel's history. Jotham's son Ahaz had some problems. Now Isaiah said, "I saw the Lord." The word "Lord" here is *Adonai*, an earthly Lord. He is sitting on a throne high and lifted up and His train filled the temple. This must be an unusual earthly lord because the angels were there crying, "holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts." And the word here is *Yahweh*. "The whole earth is full of His glory."

Verse 5 states, "Woe is me. I am undone. I am a man of unclean lips." Isaiah is identifying himself with King Uzziah, this good king to whom he often preached. "I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips for my eyes have seen the king, *Yahweh* of Hosts." One thing a lot of Jewish people as well as Jehovah's Witnesses do not want to say, is that they do not want to call the Father *Adonai*. They do not want that at all.

And so, there is a problem here. Is the *Adonai* that is sitting on the throne, the Father? They have to agree. They are not going to give this glory to Jesus, that is for sure. Well, then He is called *Yahweh* of Hosts, the Father. They will not mind that, but He is called the king *Yahweh* of Hosts. And they will not mind that He is a king either. But, how do you explain that He is called *Adonai*

in the first verse? “I don’t know. Tradition. I don’t know. I don’t know. Maybe it’s a manuscript problem. I don’t know.” Do you understand me?

To me, the Bible is so wonderful. The details of it are absolutely incredible. Here God gives you a situation you cannot get out of. Most everyone reading this would think, I saw *Yahweh* sitting on His throne. But wait a minute. You saw *Adonai*, an earthly Lord. Now, He is called *Yahweh* of Hosts. He is called the King. We’ve got an earthly lord called the King, *Yahweh* of Hosts. What a wonderful passage this is.

I hope you are all getting excited about this! Turn to 1 Samuel 17:45. What father who loves the Lord and teaches the Bible to his children has not told the story of David and Goliath? I always did it dramatically. My kids always wanted me to play Goliath, and I never could quite figure that out.

[Now when the English Bible, specifically the King James Version, translates the word “lord” with all caps (e.g., LORD) it refers to *Yahweh* and if it is spelled with just a uppercase “L” (e.g., Lord) then it refers to *Adonai*.]

First Samuel 17:45 says, “Then said David to the Philistine, ‘Thou comest to me with a sword, with a spear, with a shield, but I come to thee in the name of *Yahweh* of armies. The God of the armies of Israel whom thou hast defied.’” Folks, this is one of the greatest texts you could ever use to prove that the Lord of Hosts is in fact, the God of the armies of Israel. That opens up your brain to a lot of other passages as well.

Now go to Joshua 5:13. “It came to pass when Joshua was by Jericho that he lifted up his eyes and looked and behold there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand.” Remember the story of Balaam in Numbers? The Angel of the Lord had a sword drawn in his hand. “And Joshua went unto him and said, ‘Art thou for us or for our adversaries?’” That is a smart question. He said, “Nay; but as captain of the host of *Yahweh* am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? And the captain of the LORD'S host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so.” Look who is saying what. A lot of people, including Jehovah’s Witnesses, try to prove that Jesus is just a commander and that He is not the Lord. Boy, it is certainly an unusual commander as He told Joshua to take his shoes off for the place he stands is holy. Now that is something that is said only by *Yahweh*.

If you keep reading you will notice that Jericho was securely shut up because of the children of Israel; none went in and none went out. Now he just asked, “What do You say to me?” And He said, “Take your shoe off your foot.” And then *Yahweh* talks to him. He just asked Him, “Tell me what You want.” And He answers, but only the Bible says it was *Yahweh* talking. Once again, we have the Commander of the Lord of Hosts as another peg in our whole argument here.

I think one of the interesting things though, is the use of plural pronouns. From Genesis 1:26 it says, “Let Us make man in Our image after Our likeness.” In chapter eleven at the Tower of Babel it says, “Let Us go down and confound their language.” In Isaiah 6:8 where we were a moment ago. Isaiah said, “Here am I.” But that was an answer. The Lord said, “Whom shall I send and who will go for Us?”

The problem of the plural pronoun is really a difficult one. Here are some of the arguments. The reason why we have that plural is because Elohim is a plural noun, even though it is referring to God. Well that is interesting, except that in the passages the Lord, *Yahweh*, said, “let Us go down” etc. Many of the Jewish writers—in fact most of them—argue that He is talking to the angels. Yet there is an exception because they do not like this explanation in the story of Creation because God alone creates. Therefore, they do not like God saying to the angels, “Hey, let us make man.” They do not believe the angels were involved in the process. But they do like that explanation in Genesis eleven, “Let us go down,” because He is the Lord of Hosts, armies, and He is taking all of His angels down with Him. When He says, “Let us,” that is where they get it, but they do not prefer that interpretation in Genesis 1. So in Genesis 1, the average Hebrew commentary on that says that this is what is called a majestic plural. “What’s a majestic plural?” you ask. It means really big. “Let us, I’m a really big person create man in our—really big—image.” But when I recite it that way, all of my Jewish rabbinical friends always say, “You’re crazy.” But I say, “It is crazy to hear you say it is a majestic plural. What good does that do? The plural even uses possessive of the word ‘image.’ Come on, what are you talking about here?”

“The Lord our God is one Lord.” They always repeat the *Shema* back to me, even if it is not the Shabbat. It is from Deuteronomy 6:4: “Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.” They go right back to that. I say, “Hey, quit putting me on.” Then they will get excited, which I like, by the way. I like the opposition to get a little excited. That means we can continue this discussion a little further. It is when the rabbi will walk away, you think, “Oh man, I lost that one.” Anyway, “The Lord our God is one Lord.” I said, “Hey quit putting me on. You know and I know *echad*. We use it every day. It means more than one.” And they always turn back and say, “Give one example.” And I say, “Sure. Genesis 2:24. The Bible says a man shall leave his father and mother, cleave to his wife and the two shall be *echad*, one flesh.” Apparently two can be one in

some sense. So God has to be more than one. And they always say, “More than one what?” As if this were something heavy duty.

Folks, there is only one God. There never has been more than one God. There are not three Gods. We do not believe that. There is only one God. But this God exists in three distinct persons as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit without ever doing any injustice to the unity which all three of those persons enjoy as one God. I hope that everybody is paying attention because this is imperative to understanding.

Ask a person the following question “What is Christianity based on?” They will respond by saying, “The death and resurrection of Christ Jesus is the central issue.” There are a lot of us who have done a lot of theological studies who come back to saying that the real watershed, besides the Bible being the word of God, is the triunity of God. If you get messed up with the Trinity it will result with a skewed view of who Jesus is. It will also skew your view of the death and the resurrection of Christ. And so the root issue of Christianity may, in fact, be the triunity of God. This means that the Jehovah’s Witnesses and our Jewish friends are correct in saying, “That is the real issue between us and you evangelical Christians.” I do not fight them on that because I agree with them that the triunity one of the central issues. I will tell them that they are exactly right. Then they go on to say, “You guys made it three Gods.” “Excuse me. We don’t believe in three Gods. We only believe in one God.” And so that doctrine affects everything else. I would not build the case for the presence of my Lord Jesus Christ in the Old Testament on plural pronouns alone. You need all the arguments.

But let us, just for a moment to wrap up this point, look at the book of John. This is one of the easier books you can take and go from Greek back to Hebrew. It is simply Jewish and it is filled

with Jewish statements and phrases and contrasts. In John 1:1, he tells us, “the Word was God.” Now, I will not go over that again. Verse 14 says, “He became flesh,” but not “He was flesh.” The word used for “became” is *ginomai*, which means a change of condition. This is the key text assuming the preexistence of Christ in the New Testament. “He became flesh,” which means that He was in existence previously to becoming flesh.

Now in John 6:51—just to show you a few things here—Jesus said, “I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread he shall live forever. And the bread I will give is my flesh which I give for the life of the world.” That is pretty strong talk, is it not?

John 6:62, “What and if you shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before.” Do you understand that the New Testament is agreeing to His preexistence? Jesus said, “I was the living bread that came down from heaven.” He was in heaven before. And in 6:62, “What if you see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before.” So you see, the New Testament clearly teaches the preexistence of Christ.

In John 8:58, we find a tremendous statement to His preexistence. It may be good to remember this verse for a future day. John 8:58 states, “Jesus said, ‘Verily, verily I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am.’” Now, if there were ever a statement of preexistence, there it is! We may question what He meant, but the Jews did not question it a bit. They immediately picked up stones to stone Him for blasphemy. Let us think about it. He could have said, “Before Abraham was I was.” And that would have been true. Now Abraham lived about 2100 years before Christ. “Before Abraham existed I was.” He was there. The Jews said, “You are not even yet 50 years old and you are saying that. Hey, come on.” Now the Jews would not have thrown stones at a guy who is crazy, but they will stone a man for blasphemy. You see, they knew that Jesus was

claiming to be *Yahweh*. Right then and there. There was not a single doubt in their minds. So how did they get that? Because every Jewish home teaches what the name of God is. It happened at the time of Moses. So when He said, “I am that I am,” it means, “Who I am I am and nothing you can say or do is ever going to change that. I’m the unchangeable Lord. Whoever I am I still am, even if you never understand that.”

Now when Jesus said, “Before Abraham was, I am,” they knew exactly what He said and as a result they picked up stones to stone Him for blasphemy. Even if you do not like that, you have to agree that He does indicate his preexistence by the statement.

In John 17:5, Jesus is prays a high priestly prayer to His Father. He says, “Now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” Now He claims to be in existence, sharing the glory of His Father before Creation. And so we even have a time factor now in terms of preexistence. In 17:24, He mentions again: “Thou lovest Me before the foundation of the world.”

In Philippians 2, Paul writes for us to have the same mind which Christ had, “Who being in the form (*morphe*) of God, did not think it robbery to be equal with God but made Himself of no reputation, took on the form of a servant, made in likeness as man, fashioned as a man, and humbled Himself.” The point is that He was in existence in the *morphe* of God—the very form of God—before He became a man. You see, the preexistence of Christ is assumed in Philippians 2:5-7. Colossians 1:17 leaves no doubt, “He is before all things.” That is the argument.

One other thing that I would like to mention, before we exit this topic of His preexistence, is His pre-eminence over all things. I touched on that in our last time together, but I would like to end

with it here. Would you take your Bibles and turn to Ephesians. This is one of the most wonderful studies, and we have only scratched the surface. In our course we have to move from doctrinal matter to doctrinal matter about Christ, but in fact, we could spend probably the entire course on this as it is such a heavy-duty matter.

There is a book that is now out of print, but you can sometimes find in an old bookstore. It was reprinted a couple of years back, but now is apparently is out of print again. The book was written by *Hengstenberg* dealing with Christology in the Old Testament. It is absolutely fabulous—a good piece of work!

Ephesians 1:20-23 addresses God's mighty power:

Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Would you casually say the Bible thinks He's number one? That He is Pre-eminent over everything that has ever been made? That He is the Creator of it all?

Colossians 1:18-19 states, "He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the first born from the dead, that in all things He might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father

that in Him should all fullness dwell.” Class, I want you to look at this text. In most English translations, the word *the Father* is in italics. Why? Because it is not in the original text. Let us read it as it is in the original text. The subject of the sentence is “all the fullness.” And so it would read like this: “All the fullness was pleased to dwell in Him.” It’s a little different because all the fullness can be like a tangible entity that the Father now puts in Jesus and you can water down what is being said by that. No. All the fullness is who God is, everything God is. And all the fullness, namely God Himself, was pleased to dwell in that physical body of the Lord Jesus.

Turn to Colossians 2:9, just to reemphasize this. “For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the godhead bodily.” In a body the fullness of the God dwelt. Now look at the next statement: “And ye are complete in Him.” It does not say, “thee are complete in Him,” but “ye.” The Old King James is the only help here. All modern English translations do not help you here. There is not one believer here who is complete like Jesus, yet that is taught by a lot of false teachers. No, you are not going to be God. You never will be God. You are men and women. You are not God and never will be! So all those Christian meetings on Christian television where they shout out, “You are God” and quote this verse, they are misquoting the verse. It is not “you” as an individual, but “you” or “ye” as plural—that is, the body of Christ. All the believers are complete. It is true that the word complete in verse 10, is the same root as fullness in verse 9. We are, as a group, filled up in Him. If all the fullness of God is in His physical body and we are in Him then we are obviously filled up too. He is the head of all principality and power. He is preeminent in everything.

This is some heavy-duty stuff here. But let me just tell you this: all the fullness of God never dwelt in any one particular physical body except Jesus. There never was anyone else, yet with all of our bodies put together we form the body of the church, and the fullness of the Lord is

expressed; His life is expressed. What does that mean? That means that I might know something about Him that you do not know. Or I might express or reflect something in Him that you are not expressing. And you express something about Him that I do not know. And together we all learn and we grow and we edify one another and grow in Him who is the head of it all.

Is everybody following this? I think we have had enough today. This is one of those examples where your head hurts and only lunch will help. Let us pray.

Thank You, Lord, for Your blessed Word. Thank you for the fact that our Lord is being honored and exalted. He is above everyone and everything. He is the Lord of all, and may that be applied in every one of our lives. Help us to stop trying to take the controls and run things. May we fall at His feet and worship Him. Thank You, Lord. In Jesus' name—the name of our Messiah. Amen.