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## JESUS IS JEHOVAH (YHWH): A STUDY IN THE GOSPELS

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In Jesus' day, it was assumed by Jews that there was only one God—Jehovah (YHWH).<sup>1</sup> Isaiah 44:6 condenses this Jewish understanding when it says, "Thus saith the Lord [Jehovah] the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord [Jehovah] of Hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God." But the New Testament added a new dimension when it ascribed divinity to Jesus (see John 1:1, 14; 20:28) or when it recorded that persons worshiped Jesus (see Matthew 2:2, 11; 28:17).

Christian theologians since the Council of Nicea have understood these passages through the doctrine of the Trinity,

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1. I use here the name Jehovah, which is familiar to Latter-day Saints, to designate the God of Israel. In the Hebrew, the God of Israel is identified using the four consonants YHWH. To these consonants were added the vowels of the Hebrew word for Lord (*Adonai*), which provided the King James designation of God in the Old Testament as Jehovah. Since the King James Version (KJV) is the standard translation used by Latter-day Saints, all quotations in English will be from the KJV unless otherwise indicated.

which states that there are three persons in the Godhead who are of one essence or of one nature. In this light, the mystery of God revealed in the incarnation of Jesus, according to traditional Christian thought, is that the Father (Jehovah) has a Son (Jesus). Thus, whatever can be said of Jehovah can also be said of His Son, who is a member of the Godhead, who is one with His Father, and who shares the nature of the Father.

This Nicene presupposition blurs an extremely important message of the New Testament; i.e., that it is not the Father who is Jehovah, but rather it is the Son who is the God of the Old Testament and who becomes incarnate. The unique Christian surprise is not that Jehovah has a son who is Jesus but rather that Jesus who is Jehovah has a Father. Latter-day Saints have made this point from the earliest times of the Restoration.

For example, Doctrine and Covenants 110:1-4 recounts the appearance of the risen Christ to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple on 3 April 1836. Jesus and Jehovah are clearly identified as the same person: "The veil was taken from our minds, and the eyes of our understanding were opened. We saw the Lord standing upon the breastwork of the pulpit, before us; and under his feet was a paved work of pure gold, in color like amber. His eyes were as a flame of fire; the hair of his head was white like the pure snow; his countenance shone above the brightness of the sun; and his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters, even the voice of Jehovah, saying: I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father."

If they are aware of the Latter-day Saint position, scholars of other Christian traditions have denied its validity. In response this paper will seek to determine what the four Gospels say about the relationship between Jehovah and

Jesus. It will be shown that when the Gospels are read without the presupposition of the Trinitarian formula, that the evidence is far stronger that Jesus and Jehovah are equated by the authors than the evidence to the contrary.

I will examine each of the four Gospels, asking whether there is evidence that the authors believed that Jesus and Jehovah were one in the same person. I will begin with the synoptic Gospels (Mark, Matthew, and Luke) and then turn to the Gospel of John, which paints a somewhat different portrait of Jesus. I will make the assumption that Mark was the first Gospel written and that both Matthew and Luke used Mark as the foundation for their Gospels.<sup>2</sup> This presupposition permits us to see the additional insights brought by Matthew and Luke, especially when they add traditions to the Markan text. It will become clear that there was either a growing understanding of Jesus' identity as the successive Gospels were written or a growing willingness to make the identity between Jesus and Jehovah more explicit as the Church and Judaism grew farther and farther apart following the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70.

### THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

A key to determining whether Jesus and Jehovah have been identified as one by the Gospel writers is how they understood the Greek word *kyrios* (translated as "Lord" in the

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2. It is generally held by New Testament scholars that Mark was the first Gospel written and that Matthew and Luke used Mark as the base for their Gospels, while adding material of which they knew. In addition, they both used a source containing sayings of Jesus known as Q (from the German word *quelle* meaning "source"). The modern father of this theory was Burnett Hillman Streeter, who wrote *The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins* (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1964), which first appeared in 1924 and was revised in 1930. Modern scholars have basically followed Streeter's thesis, and I believe the above stated relationships between the Gospels and their sources to be correct, based on internal evidence in the Gospels.

English) when it was applied to Jesus. While there are a variety of uses of the word in classical Greek, the document of greatest relevance to our study is the Septuagint (hereafter abbreviated LXX), a widely used Greek translation of the Old Testament. Most of the Old Testament quotations in the gospels are taken from the LXX. Thus, the LXX becomes the seedbed for our understanding of *kyrios* in the Gospels, in large measure because the word *kyrios* occurs in the Gospels first in Old Testament quotations.

In the LXX, *kyrios* is used primarily as the equivalent of Jehovah. Gottfried Quell makes the following observation: "In the religious sphere [in the Septuagint], then, *kyrios* or *o kyrios* is reserved for the true God, and, apart from unimportant periphrases of the name in figurative speech, it is used regularly, i.e., some 6156 times, for the proper name *yhwh* in all its pointings and in the combination *yhwh sabaoth* or in the short form *yh*."<sup>3</sup> In other words, in the LXX, the "Bible" of the New Testament writers, *kyrios* is the word used to translate Jehovah. No one knowledgeable of the word's use in the LXX would miss the potential link to Jehovah. We will see in the following material how this may apply to Jesus.

## THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

### KYRIOS AND SON OF MAN

The Gospel of Mark begins with a quotation from the Old Testament that includes the word *kyrios*. What is intended by Mark? Does he want us to see an identification between Jesus and Jehovah? I believe so, but that identification cannot be proven solely by these initial verses. If Mark wants us to see

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3. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1991), s.v. "kyrios."

Jesus and Jehovah as one, there will need to be further supporting evidence. However, having said this, let us turn to Mark 1:2-3: "As it is written in the prophets, 'Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'"

Verse 2 is a quotation from Malachi 3:1, and in Malachi, God says that He will send a messenger to prepare *His* way. In the Markan context, the messenger is understood as John the Baptist. However, in Mark whose way is prepared? By quoting Isaiah 40:3, Mark leaves no doubt. The way that is prepared is the way of the *kyrios* (LXX) or Jehovah (Hebrew). For whose arrival does John the Baptist's ministry prepare? Jesus' arrival. Thus, it would seem that Jesus must be the *kyrios* and therefore must also be Jehovah. The basic problem with making this easy equation is that in the Gospel of Mark most of the uses of *kyrios* are open to various interpretations or are found in Old Testament citations (see Mark 1:3; 11:9, 10; 12:11, 29, 30, 36, 37) and are not tied unequivocally to Jesus.

There is, however, one outstanding exception to this found in Mark 2:28, where Jesus says, "Therefore the Son of man is Lord [*kyrios*] also of the sabbath." There has been much written about the meaning of the phrase "Son of man," but it seems to be the enigmatic way in which Jesus spoke of Himself.<sup>5</sup> Thus, what Jesus is really saying is "I am Lord of the Sabbath." There could be no clearer identification with Jehovah, who gave all the Sabbath regulations. Jesus states

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4. There is better textual evidence for "It is written in Isaiah the Prophet." See Barbara Aland et al., ed., *The Greek New Testament*, 4th ed. rev. (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993), 117.

5. Not all New Testament scholars agree with this position, especially if they see little historical veracity in the biblical narrative. However, strong cases for it being Jesus' self-designation have been made by E. Schweizer, "The Son of

clearly the intent of the Sabbath: it was for the welfare of human beings. People were not to be controlled by the Sabbath, but rather blessed by it. He, the *kyrios*, gave the Sabbath regulations, and He can spell out the Sabbath's meaning, for He is Jehovah incarnate.

#### LORD OF NATURE AND *EGO EIMI*

A major argument for Jesus being Jehovah incarnate is that He does what is proper only to Jehovah. This is particularly true in His relation to the natural world. Central is the story of the storm on the Sea of Galilee. Jesus was sleeping in the stern of the boat, the storm arose, and the disciples feared for their lives. They awakened Jesus and implied that He was less concerned than He should have been about their safety: "And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith? And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" (Mark 4:39-41). The answer to the disciples' question is found in the Psalms: "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord [Jehovah], and his wonders in the deep. For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end. Then they cry unto the Lord [Jehovah] in their trouble, and he bringeth them out

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Man," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 79 (1960): 119-29; "The Son of Man Again," *New Testament Studies* 3 (1962-63): 256-61; M. D. Hooker, *The Son of Man in Mark* (Montreal: McGill, 1967); and F. H. Borsch, *The Son of Man in Myth and History* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1967). I choose to follow this line of thought.

of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven" (Psalm 107:23-30). And, "O Lord [Jehovah] God of hosts, who is a strong Lord [Jehovah] like unto thee? or to thy faithfulness round about thee? Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them" (Psalm 89:8-9).

It is Jehovah who made the natural world. It is He who controls it. It is He who is in the boat.

The above account is augmented by the addition of Jesus walking on the water in Mark 6:48-51: "And about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them. But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out: for they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid. And he went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered."

But should they have wondered? Job states that it is God "which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea" (Job 9:8). More definite, however, than this allusion is another clue in the text itself. Jesus said, "It is I," in Greek, *ego eimi*.

*Ego eimi* means "I am" or "I am he." In the latter half of Isaiah in the LXX, these words are understood as the name of the God who is Jehovah. For example, in Isaiah 45:18 the Hebrew uses the phrase *ani YHWH*, meaning "I am Jehovah." The LXX translates these Hebrew words simply as *ego eimi*. The Hebrew of Isaiah 43:25 may be translated as "I, I am He who blots out transgressions." However, in the LXX it is translated in such a way that it may be understood as "I am I AM who blots out transgressions." Similarly, Isaiah 51:12 and 52:6



both use this formula, and the former can be translated as "I am I AM who comforts you" and the latter as "I AM is the one who speaks."<sup>6</sup> Thus, when Jesus says, as He approaches the boat with the fearful disciples, "It is I" (*ego eimi*), He is giving his first explicit hint of His real identity. He is I AM, Jehovah, the God of the Old Testament, and the one to whom these words specifically refer in Isaiah. He is the one who created and controls all of nature.

### HEALING AND THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS

The rabbis (scribes) knew their theology well. Only God had the power to forgive sins, and thus they were shocked when Jesus told a man that his sins were forgiven, but they missed the meaning of Jesus' words. He was Jehovah and therefore had the power to forgive sins:

When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.

But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?

And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts?

Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?

But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,)

I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.

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6. Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John (I-XII)* (Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday, 1966), 535-38.



And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion. (Mark 2:5-12)

In Jesus' day, it was believed that there was a direct connection between sin and disease. One became ill because one had done something wrong. Essentially, this was the philosophy of Job's friends, all of whom tried to "comfort" Job by trying to get him to admit that he had sinned. This was the presupposition that lay behind the question in the Gospel of John about who sinned, the blind man or his parents, since the man had been born blind (see John 9:1). The hinge text which relates healing and the forgiveness of sins is Psalm 103:2-5: "Bless the Lord [Jehovah], O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's."

Jesus did what Jehovah had done: He healed and forgave. Many other Old Testament texts could be cited that show that God alone forgives sins, thereby further emphasizing the unity of Jehovah and Jesus. For example, Moses asks Jehovah to forgive the people of Israel, which Jehovah does: "Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now. And the Lord [Jehovah] said, I have pardoned according to thy word" (Numbers 14:19-20). Other passages which recognize that Jehovah forgives sins are Psalms 25:18; 32:5; 85:2; 99:8; Jeremiah 31:34; 36:3. Jesus does what Jehovah does.

## KING OF THE JEWS

Another event which needs to be examined is Jesus' acceptance before Pilate of the title "King of the Jews." The King James Version translates the Greek literally when it reads, "And Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answering said unto him, Thou sayest it" (Mark 15:2). However, the Greek *su legeis* is normally understood to be an affirmation and should be translated as, "Yes, it is as you say" (NIV). Who is king of the Jews? The answer is clearly given in 1 Samuel 8:6-7: "But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the Lord [Jehovah]. And the Lord [Jehovah] said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them." Jehovah is king of the Jews, for even a king like David was only God's vice-regent. In the fullest and truest sense, only Jehovah could ever be king of Israel. Numerous psalms proclaim Jehovah as king (see Psalms 10:16; 24:7-10), as do Isaiah (see 6:5; 33:22; 43:15) and Jeremiah (see 10:7; 10; 48:15; 51:57). Prior to the Resurrection, it is almost certain that persons may have believed Jesus to be the Messiah and thus possibly an earthly king. However, the full implications of His kingship are realized only following His resurrection. He is Israel's only king. He is Jehovah.

## THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

Because 90 percent of Mark is contained in the Gospel of Matthew, I will not again go through the above texts. I will, however, see what Matthew may add to them.

## KYRIOS AND SON OF MAN

Whereas the word *kyrios* occurred only fifteen times in the Gospel of Mark and its direct connection with Jesus was not fully clear, the word appears in the Gospel of Matthew

seventy-two times. The fundamental difference between the two Gospels is that people address Jesus as *kyrios* twenty-one times in Matthew (see 8:2, 6, 8; 13:51; 14:28; 18:21). Given what has already been said about the word's relationship to Jehovah in the LXX, this increased use enhances the identity between Jesus and Jehovah, especially when we consider that most scholars believe that Matthew was written for a Jewish-Christian community. It is hard to believe that these persons would have missed such an obvious connection between Jesus and Jehovah.

Matthew makes the identification clearer with a statement and a parable of Jesus. The statement is found in Matthew 7:21-22: "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord [*kyrie*, the vocative of *kyrios*], have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And I will profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

Note that Jesus states that people will address him as "Lord" and will claim to have prophesied and worked in His name. However, "in that day," which Matthean scholars understand to be a reference to the last judgment,<sup>7</sup> Jesus will deny that He ever knew them. Why? Because, the essence of discipleship according to Matthew is to have compassion and mercy on people, not merely to do mighty works or to prophesy. In other words, Matthew has little interest in a Christianity that professes faith but is not worked out through deeds in daily life.<sup>8</sup> And who is the judge? According to multiple

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7. W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann, *Matthew* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1971), 87; David Hill, *The Gospel of Matthew* (London: Oliphants, 1972), 152.

passages in the Old Testament, it is Jehovah who judges. Abraham expresses this when he argues with the Lord (Jehovah): "Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Genesis 18:25).<sup>8</sup> Jehovah is judge, a fact underlined again and again in the Old Testament (e.g., Deuteronomy 32:36; 1 Samuel 2:10; Psalms 7:8; 50:6; 96:13; Isaiah 3:13; Jeremiah 11:20; Ezekiel 7:27; Joel 3:12). Jesus does what Jehovah does—He judges, in this case, at the last day.

The parable of the separation of the sheep and goats (see Matthew 25:31–46) extends Jesus' role as judge and combines the titles of *kyrios* and Son of Man. I have already shown that the title Son of Man seems to be a self-designation used by Jesus. In Matthew it is used twenty-eight times, and in Mark it is used fourteen times. The parable begins with the following: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left" (Matthew 25:31–33).

It is clear that the scene is the last judgment and that the Son of Man is Jesus. He first separates out the righteous who are surprised when He says that they had fed Him, given Him a drink, taken Him in, clothed Him, and visited Him. They ask, "Lord [*kyrie*], when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?" (Matthew 25:37). The wicked ask a similar question in Matthew 25:44. In both cases, the Son

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8. Robert A. Spivey and D. Moody Smith, *Anatomy of the New Testament*, 5th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1995), 113–15.

9. This quotation is from the New International Version of the Bible. In this instance, it is clearer than the slightly cumbersome phrasing in the KJV.

of Man is addressed as *kyrie*—Lord. Both groups are members of the Church, for both know Him to be the Lord. They are judged by the Son of Man (Jesus), or the Lord, based on whether they have been compassionate and merciful or not. A Jewish audience would have understood Jesus to be fulfilling the role of Jehovah as judge at the last day.

#### LORD OF NATURE AND *EGO EIMI*, HEALING AND FORGIVENESS, KING OF THE JEWS

Matthew uses the Markan accounts of the above events with very little change. He edits the accounts, shortens them slightly, and corrects Mark's imperfect Greek. However, an important modification appears in the stilling of the storm. Matthew changes the disciples' form of address from "Teacher [*didaskale*], save us" to "Lord [*kyrie*], save us," thereby underlining Jesus' lordship (Matthew 8:25). In the account of Jesus walking on the water, the statement "It is I" (*ego eimi*) is retained, but again Jesus' lordship is heightened by Peter's attempt to walk on the water. Initially, he asks Jesus (*kyrie*) to let him walk on the waves, and when he begins to sink he cries out in faith, "Lord [*kyrie*], save me," stressing once again that Jesus is the Lord—Jehovah (14:30).

#### THE NAME JESUS

It is no accident that Joseph is told, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). Some persons may not realize that the Hebrew form of *Jesus* is *Joshua*, or in its fullest form *Yehoshuah*, which means "Jehovah is salvation," or "Jehovah saves," or "Jehovah will save."<sup>10</sup> In addition Matthew tells us that giving this name to the baby is to fulfill

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10. George Arthur Buttrick, ed., *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), s.v. "Jesus Christ."

the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14, which states: "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matthew 1:23). Given what we have already said about the word *kyrios* and its relation to Jehovah and the affirmation that God will be with His people in Jesus, it seems clear that Matthew wanted his readers to make the connection between God in their midst (Emmanuel), Jehovah, and Jesus—who is the one who saves.

### WORSHIP OF JESUS

Only Jehovah was to be worshiped by the Jewish people. No thing or person was to be worshiped in His stead, and for those of Israel who did worship other gods, the punishment was to be sure and final—stoning. Deuteronomy 13:6–11 states:

If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers;

Namely, of the gods of the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth;

Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him:

But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people.

And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die; because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the Lord [Jehovah] thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this is among you.

Despite this, the astounding claim is made in Matthew that persons worshiped Jesus. The Wise Men sought the king of the Jews in order to worship him (see Matthew 2:2). When they finally found Jesus and Mary, they fell down and worshiped the boy (2:11). After Jesus saved Peter from sinking as he tried to walk on the water, those in the boat worshiped Jesus (14:33). Twice following the Resurrection, Jesus was worshiped (28:9, 16).

We need to remember that Matthew was probably written for a Jewish-Christian audience. To a person of Jewish extraction, it would have been horrifying to hear that a man, even a resurrected man, was worshiped, unless of course he was the one they had always worshiped—Jehovah. This, I believe, is precisely what Matthew wants his readers to understand.

#### A NEW LAWGIVER OR THE SAME LAWGIVER?

John L. McKenzie's opening comment about the Sermon on the Mount is typical of most commentators on Matthew. He says, "Jesus is meant to be the new Moses proclaiming the new revelation on a new Mt. Sinai."<sup>11</sup> Given all that has been said above, it is impossible to agree that Jesus is a new lawgiver or a new Moses. He is, in fact, the same person who gave the law to Moses at Sinai and is thus the one who now has the right to explain the law in its totality.

Matthew has a consistent pattern of presentation in the five major sections of his Gospel. He first shows Jesus doing things, and then he presents Jesus explaining what He has

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11. John L. McKenzie, "The Gospel According to Matthew," in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed. Raymond S. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy, 2 vols. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1968), 2:69.



done. According to Matthew, Jesus was baptized by John "to fulfil all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15). Spivey and Smith state, "In Matthew '*righteousness*' means that conduct which is in agreement with God's will and well pleasing to him."<sup>12</sup> Thus, the accounts of the baptism and the temptation both exhibit in practice the fulfilling of all righteousness. The Sermon on the Mount then explains what this means.

In short, fulfilling all righteousness means being in harmony with the direct will of God, not just adhering to external forms as did some of the Pharisees. Thus, in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus, the original lawgiver, teaches the true intent of the law. Persons are to go beyond externals such as not killing (see Matthew 5:22), not committing adultery (5:28), not divorcing (5:31), not breaking an oath (5:33), not exacting a commensurate penalty (5:38), or loving neighbors while still hating enemies (5:43). The Pharisees did all these things. They obeyed the external law, but they could still be polluted on the inside. A righteousness higher than that of the Pharisees (5:20), which Jesus demands, means that persons will live in harmony with the direct will of God. If they will do this, then they will not only do what God desires but will also be clean internally: they will not be angry, will not lust, will make no oaths, and will love their enemies as well as their neighbors. Thus, Jesus contrasts "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time" with "But I say unto you." What He teaches is the intent, not the form, of the law. He does not give a new law, as McKenzie suggests, for as Jesus says: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matthew 5:17-18). Jesus

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12. Spivey and Smith, *Anatomy*, 106.

fulfilled the law not only by living the external forms of it but by living precisely what He meant by it when He gave it as Jehovah. The law was to cleanse the inner vessel and condition thoughts and feelings, as well as actions. Jesus elucidates what He Himself intended the law should mean to people and did not merely parrot what previous interpreters had said about it.<sup>13</sup>

### JESUS CLAIMS THE TEMPLE

The account of Jesus cleansing the temple is found in Mark, but Matthew makes a slight change in wording that alters the way persons should understand Jesus' relation to the temple. In Mark, Jesus casts out the money changers, and then we read: "And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? But ye have made it a den of thieves" (Mark 11:17). In Matthew, however, Jesus does not cleanse the temple and then teach. Instead, He explains why He cleanses the temple as He is taking ownership of it: "And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves, and said unto them, It is written, *My house* shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves" (Matthew 21:12-13, emphasis added). It is Jesus' house, because it had always been Jehovah's house.

### THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

The Gospel of Luke presents different challenges than does Matthew. It is written for a gentile audience, and while Luke is concerned to show a continuity between Judaism and

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13. Spivey and Smith, *Anatomy*, 107-11.

the Church, he does it in ways that would be comprehensible to Gentiles. However, lest one be tempted to place Luke in a totally gentile environment, we need to be aware that he quotes extensively from the Old Testament. When he does, his quotations are word for word from the LXX. He seeks to draw his gentile readers into God's history with his people, the Jews, a history that was expanding through Christianity to the gentile world. Despite his gentile emphasis, Luke is very much at home in the world of Old Testament Judaism.

#### KYRIOS AND SON OF MAN

Joseph A. Fitzmyer says of Luke's use of *kyrios*: "In using *kyrios* of both Yahweh and Jesus in his writings Luke continues the sense of the title already being used in the early Christian community, which in some sense regard Jesus as on a level with Yahweh. This is not yet to be regarded as an expression of divinity, but it speaks at least of his otherness, his transcendent character."<sup>14</sup> Fitzmyer's statement is too weak based on the evidence in the Gospel of Luke. A stronger case can be made for Matthew's use of *kyrios* being an identification with Jehovah, since Matthew writes for a Jewish audience that would not have missed the implications of the word, but Luke was also steeped in the LXX background, which uses *kyrios* as the translation of Jehovah. It is possible that Luke's audience would not immediately have seen the full import of the word, but Luke probably did. In chapters 1 and 2, *kyrios* is used twenty-four times to designate the God of Israel—Jehovah. The same word is used for Jesus thirty-one times in the rest of the Gospel. It strains credulity to suppose that

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14. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke (I-IX)* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1981), 203.

readers would somehow make a neat distinction between the two uses and not see them pointing to the same being.

Luke preserves an additional Son of Man saying in Luke 19:10. Jesus had gone to the house of Zacchaeus, the tax collector, who committed to giving half his goods to the poor and to returning four times over any monies that he gained deceitfully. Jesus' response was, "This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:9-10). I believe that behind this statement we were meant to hear the words of Jehovah in Ezekiel 34:16: "I [Jehovah] will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away." In John we will see the concept of Jesus as the Good Shepherd fully developed, but Luke gives us a preview of it in this passage.

#### OTHER MARKAN PARALLELS

Luke preserves the Markan connection between healing and the forgiveness of sins (see Luke 5:20-24), Jesus' lordship over the Sabbath (see 6:5), His stilling of the storm (see 8:24-25), and His role as King of the Jews (see 23:3, 38). Luke does not include, however, the account of Jesus walking on the water, with its attendant *ego eimi*. Instead, he includes two *ego eimi* sayings unique to his Gospel, but neither of them is clearly a claim of divinity (see 21:8; 22:70).

Luke adds an account of Jesus forgiving sins when he recounts the story of the woman who washed Jesus' feet with her tears (see 7:36-50). In verse 48 Jesus tells the woman that her sins are forgiven and receives the same shocked response from His listeners as He did when He healed the paralytic (see 5:17-26). Those who were eating with Him asked the question, "Who is this that forgiveth sins also?" (7:49). The answer is, of course, that He is Jehovah, since only Jehovah can forgive sins.

# "LEAVE ME, LORD"

One of the most striking claims for Jesus' divinity in the Gospel of Luke is overlooked by most commentators. Most assume the account to be a resurrection narrative placed in a preresurrection setting, thus discounting its historicity as it stands. Almost no one ties the account to any Old Testament antecedents. Consequently, virtually all miss the point that Luke intended his readers to understand—that Jehovah of the Old Testament is Jesus of the Gospel of Luke.

The context of the account is the miraculous catch of fish which occurred after Jesus directed the disciples to throw their nets out one more time. It is Peter's reaction that interests us here. In Luke 5:8-10 we read: "When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord [*Kyrie*]. For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken: and so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men."

The Old Testament parallel to this passage is Isaiah's vision of Jehovah in the temple. Isaiah responds to that vision as follows: "Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord [Jehovah] of hosts" (Isaiah 6:5). To read the first account without remembering the second seems strange, but as noted above, most commentators ignore the Isaiah parallel.<sup>15</sup> The exception is Norval Geldenhuys, who says: "In any case, this

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15. Those who make no reference to Isaiah are G. B. Caird, *Saint Luke* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963), 90-91, who sees the catch of fish having a moral impact on Peter; E. Earl Ellis, *The Gospel of Luke* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1966), 102-3, who sees "Peter's doubts about Jesus giv[ing] way to doubts

event formed a tremendous turning-point in Peter's life. His exclamation reminds us of Job's words, 'now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes' (Job xlii. 5, 6), and also of Isaiah's words after he had seen the glory of God: 'Woe is me! for I am undone!' (Isaiah vi. 5). When Peter, through Jesus' revelation of power, began to see Him in His divine majesty, this immediately brought him instinctively to realise his own sinfulness. The first natural reaction of a person under such circumstances is to feel that one cannot exist before the Holy One, and therefore Peter cried out impulsively: 'Depart from me, O Lord!'<sup>16</sup> Geldenhuys basically understands Luke's message. The God, Jehovah, that Isaiah met in the temple is now incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ.

### SYNOPTIC SUMMARY

All three synoptic Gospels have sufficient material to lead readers to equate Jesus with Jehovah of the Old Testament. Mark is probably the least fully developed theologically, but most of the elements are already there—*kyrios* and Son of Man sayings, the Lord of nature and *ego eimi* passages, connections between healing and forgiveness of sins, and references to Jesus' kingship. All of these strains are maintained and augmented in Matthew and Luke. In the end, it seems clear that we are to see Jesus and Jehovah as one, at least from the standpoint of the synoptic writers.

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about himself" and carrying messianic implications; and John Martin Creed, *The Gospel According to St. Luke* (London: Macmillan, 1969), 75, although in his comment on verse 10 he says, "The Divine Lord reassures his awestruck follower." Fitzmyer, *Luke*, mentions that Peter's reaction is similar to Isaiah's, but for him the pericope reflects a postresurrection *Sitz im Leben* (567-68).

16. Norval Geldenhuys, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1951), 182.

## THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

John presents us with a world different from that of the synoptic accounts, which present Jesus' preaching in a public context. Much of John is instruction to those who are close to Jesus. There is a greater sense of intimacy between Jesus and His close disciples. Thus, Jesus says more about Himself. We will not enter into the debate about whether all the sayings in John are from Jesus Himself. The critical issue is what we are to understand about Jesus and His relationship to Jehovah from the Gospel in its present form. John is unquestionably the easiest Gospel from which to make the identification between Jesus and Jehovah.

## YOU DO NOT KNOW ME

There is an interesting dialogue between Jesus and the Pharisees in John 8:18-19: "I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me. Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also." The Pharisees see Jesus as a mere mortal, and perhaps there is even a hint that Jesus was conceived illegitimately in their question, "Where is thy Father?" The Father of whom Jesus speaks was never known to the Jews, although they did speak of Jehovah as Father or see Him in a fatherly role (see Deuteronomy 32:6; Psalms 89:26; 103:13; Isaiah 1:2; 63:15; 64:8; Hosiah 11:1; Malachi 2:10).<sup>17</sup> The Father of whom the Jews spoke actually stood among them. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?" (John 14:9). In a Jewish context, where Jehovah was the Father, if Jesus is Jehovah incarnate, then what He says is

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17. Kittel and Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary*, s.v. "Pater."



absolutely true: those who have seen Him have seen the Father as they understood that word. We will now see if the Gospel of John can support this interpretation.

### *EGO EIMI*

The central passage where *ego eimi* stands by itself in John's Gospel is found in John 8:56-59. It says: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am [*ego eimi*]. Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by." Jesus explicitly claimed for Himself the Old Testament name of God (*ego eimi* or YHWH), and the Jews clearly understood this, for they picked up stones in order to kill Him for the sin of blasphemy.

Similarly, Jesus used this unequivocal statement when the soldiers came out to arrest Him in the Garden of Gethsemane: "Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons. Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he [*ego eimi*]. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he [*ego eimi*], they went backward, and fell to the ground. Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he [*ego eimi*]: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way" (John 18:3-8). The reaction of the soldiers is as clear as the reaction of the Jews in John 8:59. Readers are to understand that Jesus is the God of the Old Testament. He is

Jehovah, for those confronted by Him fall back in awe and fear.

A third use of *ego eimi* is parallel to the synoptic account of Jesus walking on the water. In John, Jesus also says, "It is I [*ego eimi*]; be not afraid" (John 6:20).

A fourth use of *ego eimi* occurs in Jesus' discussion with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. We read in John 4:25-26: "The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he [*ego eimi*]." The importance of this passage is not that Jesus is the Messiah but rather that He is more than the Messiah. He is the I AM, who is Jehovah of the Old Testament.<sup>18</sup> Thus, by the use of *ego eimi* without predicates, John affirmed the identification between Jesus and Jehovah. To hold that Jesus is merely using the title as an extension of the Father, or because He and the Father are one, is to manipulate the clear meaning of the texts.

### JESUS IS GOD

In the synoptic Gospels, we had to demonstrate indirectly that each author held Jesus to be divine. However, that is not necessary in the Gospel of John, because John explicitly states that Jesus is God. In the beginning of the Gospel, we read: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John

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18. Brown, *John*, sees the *ego eimi* as Jesus' acceptance of the title Messiah, even though Brown believes that it may be intended in the "style of divinity" (172-73).

1:1-3, 14; emphasis added). Jesus is the Word that becomes flesh. The Word is God, and through Jesus, the Word, were all things created. He came and "tabernacled" with His people, in the same way Jehovah's *shekinah* (His presence) tabernacled with the people of Israel in the tent of meeting in the wilderness. Brown makes the following observation: "It is quite possible that in the use of *skēnōn* the Prologue is reflecting the idea that Jesus is now the *shekinah* of God, the locus of contact between the Father and those men among whom it is His delight to be."<sup>19</sup> Brown is correct as far as he goes. But Jesus is not the place where the Father (Jehovah) and human beings meet; rather, He is Jehovah whom human beings meet. It is He, God Himself, who reveals the previously unknown Father.

The second passage that unequivocally affirms Jesus' divinity is John 20:28. Thomas had been absent when the risen Jesus appeared to the disciples, so Thomas had doubted the others' report. When confronted by the risen Jesus Himself, however, his response is swift and undiluted. He says, "My Lord and my God." What God? In a Jewish climate, there is only one possibility. He has to be Jehovah. In this context, it makes sense that the man who was born blind worshiped Jesus (see John 9:38) and that John the Baptist designated Jesus as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world (John 1:29).

#### THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Jesus said: "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth,

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19. Brown, *John*, 33-34.

because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep" (John 10:11-13).

Behind this assertion must stand Ezekiel 34. There we first hear of the "hirelings": "Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks? . . . The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them" (Ezekiel 34:2, 4). The remedy in Ezekiel is that God Himself will become the Shepherd: "For thus saith the Lord [Jehovah] God; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. . . . I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong: I will feed them with judgment" (Ezekiel 34:11-12, 16).

The new Christian element is that the Shepherd will lay down His life, something which Ezekiel did not say Jehovah would do. However, that is part of the surprising Christian revelation—Jehovah can lay down His life for His sheep (see John 10:17).

Tied to the Shepherd are those whom He sends out in His name—especially Peter—for it is against the background of Ezekiel 34 that Jesus' commissioning of Peter to feed His sheep must be understood. Peter and the Church, as the representatives of Jehovah, carry on the work of the Good Shepherd (see John 21:15-17).

## JESUS AS KING

Like the synoptic writers, John affirms Jesus' kingship. At the very beginning of John, Nathanael says, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel" (John 1:49). Given the fact that Nathanael addresses Jesus as Rabbi and Son of God, the phrase "King of Israel" would best be understood at this early time in Jesus' ministry as a messianic title. Jesus is a king like David. However, by the time Jesus completed His ministry, the title carried very different connotations for John.

Like the synoptic writers, John records Jesus' and Pilate's discussion about kingship. We read: "Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence [But now my kingdom is from another place—NIV]. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king [You are right in saying I am a king—NIV]. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice" (John 18:36–37).

Like the synoptic writers, John shows Pilate trying to satisfy the Jews by having Jesus whipped and humiliated. He then had Jesus brought out: "And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:14–15).

It is the last statement that is not found in the synoptic Gospels. Earlier we showed that the true king of Israel was Jehovah. As we saw in 1 Samuel 8:7, Jehovah said: "Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for

they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them." Once again, the Jewish leaders, knowing full well whom the scriptures say is their king, reject Jehovah as king when they reject Jesus. They are no longer religious leaders but rather are crass political beings who place personal security in the Roman Empire before their allegiance to the God of Israel.

### JESUS IS THE LIGHT

In the Gospel of John there are a variety of words used to describe Jesus and His work. John speaks of Jesus' glory (see John 1:14; 2:11; 17:24) and of Him as the Savior of the world (see John 4:42), as well as the Word (see John 1:1, 14). Jesus says that He is the light (see John 8:12), the truth (see John 14:6), and the life (see John 11:25).

When we turn to the Old Testament, we find a number of passages that identify Jehovah with light. For example, Psalm 89:15 states: "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance." Other passages that have a similar content are Psalm 104:2, Isaiah 2:5, and Micah 7:8. It is interesting to see, however, that light, when used with reference to Jehovah, is often coupled with another word, a word that is used to describe Jesus in the Gospel of John. Consider the following: "The Lord [Jehovah] is my *light* and my *salvation*; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psalm 27:1; emphasis added). "For with thee is the fountain of *life*: in thy *light* shall we see light" (36:9; emphasis added). "O send out thy *light* and thy *truth*: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles" (43:3; emphasis added). "Thy *word* is a lamp unto my feet and *light* unto my path" (119:105; emphasis added). And, "The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord [Jehovah] shall be unto thee

an everlasting *light*, and thy God thy *glory*. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord [Jehovah] shall be thine everlasting *light*, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended" (Isaiah 60:19-20; emphasis added). Because Jesus is Jehovah incarnate, all of the above words may appropriately be applied to Him as John does.

### JOHANNINE CONCLUSIONS

There is a tremendous amount of evidence in John that the writer intends us to understand that Jesus and Jehovah are the same person. The examples given above are as explicit as one could be without saying, "I want you to understand that I am portraying Jesus and Jehovah as the same person." It is true that John has fewer direct citations of the Old Testament than do the synoptic authors. However, virtually every line of the Gospel of John is filled with Old Testament allusions. Brown states: "The infrequency of Johannine *testimonia* is deceptive, however, as Barrett has shown in his article on the subject. Many of the themes of the Synoptic *testimonia* have been woven into the structure of the Fourth Gospel without explicit citation of the OT. . . . John reflects even more clearly than the Synoptic Gospels the great currents of the OT thought. . . . Many of the allusions to the OT are subtle, but quite real."<sup>20</sup> Given this, it is difficult to see how anyone can read the above materials and not see that John believed that the God of the Old Testament, Jehovah, had become incarnate in Jesus Christ.

### JESUS AND THE FATHER

Throughout the Gospels it is made clear that the disciples often did not understand what Jesus was saying to them. For

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20. Brown, *John*, lix-lx.



example, in Mark 8:17-18, 21 we read: "And when Jesus knew it, he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened? Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember? . . . And he said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand?"

Other passages make a similar point (see Mark 7:18; 9:32; John 8:27; 12:16), but the text that demonstrates most clearly the disciples' lack of understanding centers around Peter's confession of Jesus as the Christ at Caesarea Philippi (see Mark 8:27-33). This passage is the center of Mark's Gospel. Immediately preceding Peter's confession of Jesus as the Christ is Jesus' healing of a blind man (see Mark 8:22-26). The unique aspect of this healing is that Jesus tries twice to heal the man, the first attempt gaining only partial vision. It is not, however, that Jesus was unable to do the healing in one act, but rather that we are presented with a typical acted-out parable, much like those that Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Hosea were commanded to perform.

The healing symbolizes the partial understanding that Peter has of Jesus' ministry. Based on Jesus' miracle working, Peter discerns that Jesus is the Christ. But when Jesus begins to tell Peter what it means for Him to be the Messiah—that He must suffer and die—Peter's understanding is clearly inadequate, for he tries to dissuade the Lord. He is like the blind man who sees only partially. Following Jesus' death and resurrection, he will understand fully (see clearly as did the blind man) that Jesus' true mission, and thus the missions of His disciples, would involve suffering and perhaps even death.

The disciples' understanding of Jesus grew over time. As we consider this, it is impossible to state with certainty whether all the uses of *kynios* in relation to Jesus in Matthew,

Luke, or John were actually used by the people in addressing Jesus, or whether it is the Gospel writers' way of helping us understand Jesus as they finally understood him following the Resurrection. However, what is certain is that the disciples did not have a postresurrection understanding of Jesus' identity during His mortal life. Many of Jesus' contemporaries probably believed as Peter did that Jesus was the Messiah. To them, Messiah meant the one who would drive the Romans out of the land and establish a government under God's rule. But Jesus' kingdom was not an earthly one. He consistently distanced Himself from actions with political overtones. Even the entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday was a religious act, for He went to the temple and challenged the practices there, rather than challenging the Romans in the Antonia fortress. It was only after the Resurrection that much of what Jesus had said to His disciples became clear. John states this when he says: "When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said" (John 2:22).

Thus, there must have been confusion surrounding much that Jesus said, including His references to His Father. Most Jews would have understood Him to be speaking of Jehovah as Father. Various people had been spoken of as sons of God or sons of Jehovah in Israel's history, especially the kings. Jesus could have fit that mold in the minds of the people. But His actions and words as recorded in the Gospels take us far beyond this concept, for what Jesus does leads us inevitably to the conclusion that He was Jehovah incarnate. That could have only become clear following the Resurrection.

Once we understand this, however, then all that He does and all that He and the Gospels claim for Him make sense. It took the incarnation of Jehovah and His willingness to suffer

the Atonement to open the veil between the Father and us. Thus, the unique knowledge that we gain from the incarnation is that Jehovah, the incarnate God of the Old Testament, has a Father who had previously been hidden from us.