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SILVER STAR BIBLE SCHOOL 1993

DEITY BEFORE MANIFESTATION IN FLESH

Speaker: Bro. Colin Hollamby

Study #1

In The Beginning Was The Word (Logos)

Reading: John 1:1-21

Dear brethren and sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We would like to begin our series at this Bible School by quoting a few words from our late bro. Robert Roberts - and it was in his diary of a voyage to Australia that he penned these words. He said, 'The doctrines of the truth embodied the thoughts of God, and the thoughts of God are higher than the thoughts of men. And therefore, the majority of men easily fail to rise to the height of them, or easily fall from the height when they are lifted up to them. The death of Christ has more to do with the exultation of God than the salvation of men. Most men take in the latter more easily than the former, and quickly get astray in the power of mere humanitarianism.'

Brethren and sisters, those words are extremely true, and they make a very valid springboard on which to base our studies for this week. I'd like to read some of those words again, because they are very challenging to our own minds. And he says, 'the death of Christ has more to do with the exultation of God than the salvation of man'.

Is that where we stand, brethren and sisters? Is that how we see the death and resurrection, the embodiment of all the life principles of the Son of God? It is extremely challenging to us.

And another very important basis for all of our remarks for this weekend will be taken from Phillipians chapter 2, to which we will turn. We don't want to explain this verse in great detail, because I'm almost certain that our other two speakers will both refer to this verse in their remarks.

In verse 13 of Phillipians chapter 2, the apostle says, after he has exhorted the brethren of Philippi to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. In verse 12 he says that the secret of salvation is that, "it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure".

We would just like to relate, brethren and sisters, that on an occasion which was over twenty years ago, we were discussing this verse with quite a prominent brother, and as we laid before him what that verse meant, he said these words which were burned into my mind, and I'll never forget them. He said, 'If that is true, what is left for me? That is what he said in response to the laying out of the principles outlined for us in Philippians chapter 2. And what we are saying by these things, brethren and sisters, from the words of bro. [Robert] Roberts and from the words of the apostle Paul, is this (as our brother John [Knowles] outlined last night): We can go into the world of Christendom, and although we won't find it as an official doctrine, we will find many individuals who believe that the Kingdom of God is going to be established on the earth; we will be able to find many individuals who do not believe in a personal immortal devil; we will be able to find many individuals who scoff at the idea of their church maintaining the doctrine of the Trinity; we will be able to find many individuals who do believe in the unity of God.

James says, "The devils do that and they tremble". What of us? Upon what basis do we really think, brethren and sisters, that the Kingdom of God will be given to people like ourselves?

This is really telling us that it doesn't really matter how much we may give our assent to the doctrines that are embodied in the Statement of Faith. It really does matter as to what the concepts are that we glean from the scriptures themselves, and which are in the Statement of faith, but which are not so readily defined in our Statement of Faith.

And it is highlighting for us the fact that it is the doctrine of God manifestation which is the doctrine of atonement, which separates us, brethren and sisters, from the rest of the religious world. And it is therefore, upon that basis that our remarks will be made during the ensuing week around these studies.

In John chapter 8, we are not going to quote all of it, but Christ said to the Jews of his day, "Ye are of your father the [diabolos]". They had a Statement of Faith like ours, brethren and sisters. They knew that Messiah was going to restore again the kingdom to Israel. They believed in the unity of the Godhead. They didn't believe in a personal, immortal devil. And the statement of the Lord Jesus Christ to them is that 'they are the children of the diabolos', because their whole system of religion, no matter how true it was in fact, had been entirely missed, because they hadn't understood the doctrine of God manifestation.

Even though they may have known, as an academic thing, the names and the titles of Deity, they were yet in their sins. And if it can apply to them, brethren and sisters, might it not with equal force apply to us, who really do have the truth? Who really have been given a rich deposit; who really have been given a treasure that's been resurrected by bro. [John] Thomas in particular, in these last days, out of the rubble and out of the mire, that had gradually gathered over the system of truth that God has revealed.

If our minds are to be enriched and ennobled and stimulated; If we are to come to grips

with the concept of God manifestation (and as our Bro. John [Knowles] last night pointed out, the whole week is entirely aimed at the reasons for why we do things); the reasons why we do what we do; And that, in its end result, will be the only difference between us and the religious world about us.

The apostle Paul said with absolute authority that, "no flesh would glory in the presence of the Deity". And that's true! As first we might kid ourselves that we could do it, we won't do it in the Kingdom of God, brethren and sisters, because God's Word is absolutely sure. It is certain - It has been refined seven times. And if Paul was inspired to say that 'no flesh would ever glory in His presence', those words are absolutely true in their simplicity and profundity.

And so what we are looking at, brethren and sisters, is our own paucity. That goes for all of us, because when it comes to us attempting to approach the living Deity, we are really pro pious. We really hardly know how to approach Him. We have a manual which tells us how. We have a record of the minds of faithful men and women who have successfully done it down through the ages; and yet we in our own days, brethren and sisters, are really pro pious in that matter.

We are so infantile in our approach to our Father in the heavens, because we do not use the tools He has given us. And the whole subject that is before us is enriching, it is ennobling, it is enlivening, and it is stimulating to our intellects, as our bro. John [Knowles] outlined to us last night. [It] has always been the objective of the Deity of the heavens that He might stimulate our intellect, that we might be, therefore, concentrating in our minds on things which are above; and therefore, be above the possibilities of falling into the power of mere humanitarianism, which is a very attractive doctrine to the old man of the flesh.

Now where do we start, brethren and sisters, in this consideration? Well, it seems it doesn't matter if we start at the end, or the beginning, or in the middle. It's very difficult to figure a starting point. But the starting point which has been outlined, has been taken from John chapter 1, verse 1, where the record says to us, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God," or rather, "the Word was with [the Theos], and the Word was [the Theos]."

Bro. [John] Thomas rightly points out that these two parties, in John chapter 1, are rather like two great powers. Like two great 'eloa', neither of which ever existed without the other; and yet the very substance which we so glibly call God.

And in such a language, brethren and sisters, which is very much poverty stricken, where God is simply a contraction of the English word 'good'; and while it is true to say that God is good, it is a very unsatisfactory title to give to the Deity and the Majesty and the Creator of the heavens and the earth. And we're going to try through our studies to avoid the use of that term, not because it cannot find a place, but simply because it is totally inadequate in defining the Being whom we are to worship and serve in the days of our pilgrimage - Because this Being we are told in Psalm 90:2 is "from everlasting to

everlasting". The prophet Isaiah in chapter 57 tells us that He is Most High and He has chosen to inhabit eternity. And eternity is a dimension, brethren and sisters, which is really impossible for us to grasp. Our minds are so small and finite, they can't take in time. And we know of our own children that it takes several years for them, in their early days, to even begin to appreciate the time with which we gauge time, let alone the expansive idea of time that the Deity must have. And therefore, we see a Being who inhabits eternity. We see a Being who dwells in unapproachable light, i.e., that is, by the eyes of mere human flesh and blood.

He is able to be seen, brethren and sisters, by the 'elohim'. It is one of those promises which the Lord makes in Matthew chapter 5; that, "the pure in heart shall see [the Deity]". And what a grand moment that will be, brethren and sisters, for eyes like ours to be able to see Him who is invisible today. And we want to try now to justify the difference between immortality and eternal life. You see, the scriptures say in the [6th] chapter of [1st] Timothy and verse [16], that '[Deity] is the only one who hath immortality'.

He is the only One who hath immortality. And that means to say, brethren and sisters, that He is the only one who has ever had as His own personal possession, underived from any other source, the power of endless life.

And even when we are made immortal, if it is God's good grace, we will not be the source of immortality. We shall not be eternal beings as God is eternal. Our immortal life will have a beginning!

As far as He is concerned there is no beginning. And even in the beginning, no matter how remote it may have been in time, was the self existent Deity, who possessed from the beginning, the wonderful power of wisdom to direct the strength that was bound up in the wonderful located nucleus which lives somewhere in the heavens.

And it is that being, brethren and sisters, that we are called upon to manifest in our daily lives. It is that Being which is from our own vision and in this generation called Invisible. Not because He is invisible in fact, but because to our eyes He is completely concealed, and therefore invisible.

He is a Being in which there is located all the power that is necessary to hang all the panoply of heaven, and to hang in their respective places all the orbs of our own very small universe. It is that power, brethren and sisters, that will be seen in its only three dimensions, because power comes under three headings - intellectual, moral and physical power.

In the 8th chapter of Proverbs, which we had read this morning [The day's opening remarks], the ideas which bro. [John] Thomas sets before us in Eureka, Volume 1, and in a section with which we are dealing, presents the idea of Proverbs 8:23-31, as these two great eloa's that have always been co-existent and co-eternal. He says that there was never a time when the one existed without the other; so that Wisdom as it is

personified in Proverbs 8, he is able to say in verse 22, "that [Yahweh] possessed me in the beginning of His way before His works of old". Yahweh possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old!

And as we go through those verses down to verse 31, we are not going to consider them now, but as our minds pervade that little scene, we are quite clearly shown these two great powers are self existent. They are co-eternal, they are co-equal, and in the language of bro. [John] Thomas which we have already quoted, they have always been there. There has never been a conceivable point of time when they were not together dwelling.

And it is that located nucleus or power which emanated both intellectual and moral powers, so that the matters, outlined in chapter 8 of Proverbs, came into being by the power of the Deity.

And we think, brethren and sisters, as the [other two] speakers are going to outline for us, the marvels of the Word made flesh. It is a miracle, brethren and sisters, that the Word was made flesh, (turn to Psalm 147), because flesh is not the only thing that the Word has become.

In Psalm 147, the psalmist is describing for us the processes of creation. And in verse 15 of Psalm 147, the psalmist under the inspiration of the Deity of course, says, "He sendeth forth his commandment .....: his word runneth very swiftly. He giveth snow like wool: he scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes. He casteth forth his ice like morsels: who can stand before his cold? He sendeth out his word, and [melts] them: he causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow."

Those works, brethren and sisters, are attributed to: the Word that God spake and it became ice; that He sent forth His Word and it began to run very swiftly and it was snow; He sent out His Word and it melted them.

The Word has become many things, brethren and sisters, apart from human flesh. In the Deity, manifested in His only begotten son, there is not a thing we see about us that has not at one time been the Word. God spake and it was done. He commanded and it stood firm.

And when we read in John chapter 1 that, "In the beginning was the Word", we are looking at an integral and an inseparable part of Deity. And bro. [Robert] Roberts has very well explained it for us in our Sunday School years, when we learned from The [Christadelphian] Instructor, brethren and sisters; when he says that God and His power are just like the sun and the warmth and the light that emanates from the sun.

Could we imagine light and warmth without the sun? Could we imagine God, the Deity, without the power that is invested in His Word to accomplish His own will and purpose? And these things, brethren and sisters, come before us in many passages of scriptures, because when we think of the concept of that Word being their from the beginning,

Psalm 138:2 says to us, the psalmist giving vent to his feeling and praise of the almighty Deity, says, "for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name".

And that word, brethren and sisters, is self existent. It is self existent as an integral and inseparable part of the Deity himself. That's not like His name. His name is something, brethren and sisters, that has only been given to the sons of men for a short period of eternity. I don't mean to say that eternity is a short period, I mean a short period out of the lengthy time of eternity. The name has only been revealed for a certain period of time. But the word was always there. And the word was always invested with the power of the being which gave unto it. And therefore, we are able to see that Yahweh has indeed magnified His Word above all His name.

Let's turn to the 18th Psalm. And in verse 30 of this place, we read of the Deity's own estimation of His Word, and the way in which He has carefully recorded that Word for us. (I think this is a wrong passage, but in the particular place that I was thinking about it says that the word of Yahweh is tried.) ["As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the LORD is tried (i.e., refined - margin) ....."]

It is tried like metals as the metallurgist subjects it to vigorous heat. It is weighed there extremely carefully so that it might be presented to us in the right form. Psalm 38:6 says that, "by [Yahweh] were the heavens made, He formed them by the breath of His mouth". Psalm 12:6 says, that "... words of [Yahweh] are pure words: as silver [is] tried in [the] furnace of earth, [and is] purified seven times."

So when we think of the concept of the ever living Deity, brethren and sisters, we are looking at a concept which has been very, very carefully weighed by Him. And the whole idea of the word 'logos', as we have it in the Greek language, is the idea of a reasoner and a revealer. And that the reasoner and the revealer has chosen to subject His Word to the most careful scrutiny, so that they can convey to us exactly what He wants to convey to us.

And brethren and sisters, it's another first principle of the grand and glorious theme that is before us: We must listen intently to what God has to say. Now we haven't time to go into the aspect of God's word any further than what we have for the moment.

Let us now turn our attention to one of the works of the Almighty Deity that was performed through His word, through His angels. Through His Word first, from that nucleus that we so glibly call God, and through the angelic ministrations recorded for us in Genesis chapter 1. We don't want to deal with this in detail now, for we know that someone else is going to do that for our considerations this week.

So then, brethren and sisters, in Genesis chapter 1, recorded in verses 26 to 28, we read of a work of the Word of the Deity. And it says there in verse 26 that 'elohim' said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness". Let us make man in our image, after our likeness - After whose likeness?

And we are now going to touch on something, brethren and sisters, extremely important for us as people who believe in the truth, and who need to be instructed in the very practical issues of life. Because when we just stand back taking in some of the descriptions that are given of the Deity in the scriptures, we are told that God is light; that God is love; we are told that God is invisible to man. We are told, brethren and sisters, that we should worship the Deity. How do we worship something we cannot see? Is it possible for us to worship something that we have never seen or even had described to us? These are some of the important and practical out workings of the doctrines that are embodied in the scriptures. Let's go a little further into Deuteronomy 4, just thinking about the concept that has been presented to us in Genesis chapter 1, verse 26.

In Deuteronomy 4, Moses is recounting the experiences of the children of Israel in the Wilderness. And in verse 5 of Deuteronomy 4, he is particularly recounting the incidents as they stood before the quaking Mount of Sinai and received the fiery laws of Moses. And the record says in verse 5, "Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the [Yahweh] my [Elohim] commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great, who hath [Elohim] so nigh unto them, as [Yahweh] our [Elohim] is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day? Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons; Specially the day that thou stoodest before [Yahweh] thy [Elohim] in Horeb, when [Yahweh] said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children. And ye came near and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness. And [Yahweh] spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice."

Brethren and sisters, how were these people going to worship the Deity who's been revealed to them? How were those people going to worship somebody which they had never seen? Can we do that? Can we worship, can we apply all the faculties of our minds towards something we have never seen? or ever had described or revealed to us?

Brethren and sisters, it is a physical impossibility. And the scriptures abound with testimony that tell us that we are to worship the Deity. 'There can be', said bro. [John] Thomas, 'no God manifestation without God'. And that is the very first place to start, brethren and sisters. [It] is for us to be able out of the revealed word of the Deity, to extract a vision and a revelation of the very being, the very person who has made known to us His Word.

And what He is trying to do, brethren and sisters, and He has extended himself as far as he can extend himself in this direction, is to get us to be like him. We're all people. We're all different personalities. How could a personality, how could a person, brethren and sisters, be like the Deity, if the Deity is not a person? If he is not a real live person? The Deity, brethren and sisters, is a real live person.

And the whole objective of God in the giving of the Law was very, very carefully planned and orchestrated so that it would exclude the possibility, (as we go on to read in verse 13 and in subsequent verses), - the whole thing was planned and orchestrated so that no one would be able to make a figure the likeness of the One they were called to worship.

And so the record goes on in verse 13, "And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone. And [Yahweh] commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it. Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that [Yahweh] spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire:"

And the whole reason why that was precluded from their vision, brethren and sisters, is outlined in verse 16, "Lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female, The likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air, The likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth: And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them, which [Yahweh] thy [Elohim] hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven"

What's He telling those people, brethren and sisters? He's telling those people that God has given the benefit of all the outworkings of that all powerful, and self existent word. He's given to all nations those benefits. But there is one thing, brethren and sisters, (we can turn over to a place like Numbers chapter 12 and see that while God concealed Himself, and while He gave them that entirely righteous law, and when He gave them all that multitude of judgments and statutes), He did not once show Himself nor a similitude of Him to the bulk of the nation of Israel.

But in Numbers chapter 12 we come to a very interesting incident in the life of Miriam against the position of Moses in the camp. And the answer of Yahweh in verse 5 is that, "...[Yahweh] came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam: and they both came forth. And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I, [Yahweh] will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house"

What Yahweh has done, brethren and sisters, is made sure that Aaron and Miriam are

completely aware of the fact that in God's estimation Moses is above any other man on the face of the earth. Even comparing him to a prophet and saying, 'If I want to reveal Myself to a prophet, I'll do it in a vision and a dream. With Moses My servant, who is faithful in all My house, I'll deal with him on another principle. I'll deal with him on a higher basis.

With him, says Yahweh in verse 8, "..... I [will] speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the [shape] of [Yahweh] [he] shall behold" He will actually see a replica of the Almighty Deity. And that, brethren and sisters, is why Moses was so successful in life, because he knew that his God was a real, live person. He knew, brethren and sisters, that he would be able in all his life to take a vision of the One who had commanded the love of all his faculties everywhere he went in life. And the apostle Paul comments on that, doesn't he, when he says, "even in the darkest depths of Egypt he endured because he could see Him who is Invisible".

There can be no manifestation, brethren and sisters, without a real appreciation and a thorough acceptance of the fact that God is a very wonderful person. And if God really wants us to be like Him, then he has done it in exactly the right way. He has formed man not only after the image of the 'elohim', but after the image of His very own person.

If you want some reading about this subject which will elevate your mind to the very highest points to which it can be elevated, read chapter 2 of The Ways of Providence. Bro. [Robert] Roberts does an amazing and a wonderful thing when he brings to our attention this vital truth.

And we ask ourselves the question again, brethren and sisters, - Can we worship someone we can't see? What is the Deity to us?

He is love. Can we worship love? What do we need to apply to love to be able to worship it? Well, God commands all our faculties. He says He wants our whole being to be centred on Him. It is not a selfish thing, brethren and sisters. It is the only thing for us to do to fulfill the role that God originally planned - that all our faculties may be centred on Him.

How do we worship love? It's impossible. How big is it? Is it that colour? - yellow, blue, red? We can only worship love, brethren and sisters, we can only have a very fond affection for love, when we see a channel of its manifestation; and, when we, therefore, go back through the channel and we see the being from which it comes and whose possession it is.

Can we worship power? What dimensions are we going to attach to power? You ask a young man who has just got his first car - he worships power. How does he worship it? He can only worship it because there is a motor up front and a gearbox, tail shaft and a differential that turns the back wheels. That's how he worships power, and that's the only way, brethren and sisters.

We will never be able to worship unless we see through the eyes of faith the source of

it. And the source of it is the One, who in Psalm 94, the psalmist speaks of. And he says in verse [8 &] 9, "Understand, ye brutish among the people: and ye fools, when will ye be wise? He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?"

Where is the prototype of these things?, brethren and sisters, is what the psalmist is asking. Have a little careful think about how we got an eye. An eye really only demands that there was an eye before. The same with an ear. An ear really only demands that it had a precedent ear. And it is the Deity's ear, and the Deity's eye. And as bro. [Robert] Roberts so wonderfully and perhaps so daringly does, brethren and sisters, in the Ways of Providence, he asks some further questions. HE says, 'Now you look at all the people in this world, the myriads of people in this world. Have you ever seen two that are totally identical in their personality?'

Why is there such a spread of uniqueness of personality? Is it not because, on the basis of what is said here, that the Deity's ears are the best and the eyes of the Deity must be the grandest. And, therefore, the personality of the Deity must be the highest and the most intense. Must that not be true, brethren and sisters? And does that not suit our mentalities entirely, that we should be able to come to see a real intense person, a real live character?

And we're going to see developed, brethren and sisters, through our two speakers, the whole idea of the intensity of that character and of that unique personality that is the Deity's, as it filters through that miraculous becoming of flesh, that the Word originally was.

And so we come to the end of our first considerations together. And we need to understand, brethren and sisters, that without the Deity, without that altogether lovely and intense character and personality, there can be no such thing as our reflection in its dimmest form of Him. We need to see Him who is invisible. Yes, but who has revealed Himself to the faithful of all generations, as the great archetype of human beings, who by His word commanded the 'elohim' to form us out of the dust of the earth and to give unto us a capacity, which none of the other animal creatures have got; that we might with that potential that is called 'AB' [see Phanerosis, pp. 38-45, Introduction - The Renewing Efficacy and Importance of the Subject], develop the likeness of the One who formed the ear and fashioned the eye, and who has indeed in that wonderful place, wherever it might be in the heavens, that glorious located being, that is the absolute effulgence of all the glory that can be imagined by our finite minds, and that in our pilgrimage we might, like Moses, be able to endure as seeing Him who is invisible.

We are called upon to worship the love, the light and the power which emanates from Him. And we can only do it, brethren and sisters, when we have that mental vision that so suits the mentality that God has given us. So suits the potential He placed in the man and the woman right from the beginning, which have only been diminished by the introduction of the lusts of the flesh and which can be restored and generated by us

giving all our faculties to those things revealed to us in His word.

And we see a picture, brethren and sisters, of that gracious and almighty Deity, who is located somewhere in the heavens, who has made eternity His habitation, and who is revealed to us as unerring, unswerving, inimitable, inscrutable, unsearchable, irresponsible, incomparable and intense in the personality and in the character which He wants us to become small replicas of. And we are able, brethren and sisters, by allowing this word to dwell in us richly in faith. And when this word dwells richly within us, we can see Him who is invisible, and we can overcome to the honour of His great name.

Brethren and sisters, the death of Christ has more to do with the exultation of God than the salvation of man. It does, however, in its breadth incorporate the salvation of man because it is our need, but it will only be accomplished by coming to grips with one thing, and it's what our Bro. John [Knowles] concluded with last night. It doesn't matter what we do, whether we eat or drink or whatever we do, we must learn to have one motive in life, that is, to do all to the glory of Deity.