



## CONTEXT FOR THE CHRIST EVENT:

# Israelite III

THE CHOSEN PEOPLE of Israel emerged at one of the most critical points in world history. The “god-consciousness” that had long possessed human beings was being withdrawn, and human self-consciousness was beginning to emerge.<sup>1</sup> In this transition period humanity was profoundly bewildered and questioned, “Who are our gods, and where have they gone?”

---

*The chosen people of Israel emerged at one of the most critical points in world history.*

---

Some concluded that the “gods” were forms of transcendent essence, substance or “*ousia*” who had emanated to the earth to dwell within mankind and who subsequently restricted their habitation to existing power structures or retreated to their original heavenly abodes. Others imagined that the gods had escaped to some subconscious and subterranean refuge at the ground of all being. Still others decided that the gods were only mythical fictions anyway.

In this situation the Hebrews radically departed from all traditional explanations. They found their own independent habitation in the Promised Land and then expressed their convictions about the nature, presence and purposes of the One-and-Only God.

1. They recognized that God pre-existed all Creation: “In the beginning God . . .” Then he acted as the Author of all Creation: “. . . [God] created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1).

2. They discerned that “God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him . . .” (Genesis 1:27). This implies that, in faith and promise (proleptically or anticipatorially), God himself was human.

3. They understood that God was not them, they were not God, nor was God in them – for after the temptation by the serpent, “they heard the voice of the

Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the *presence* of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden” (Genesis 3:8, italics supplied).

4. The Lord appeared to Abraham, the father of Israel, in the plains of Mamre. There the Lord talked with Abraham, ate with Abraham, and later argued with Abraham over the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18:1ff). Still later, God wrestled all night with Abraham’s grandson, Jacob, at the brook, Peniel (Genesis 32:24-30). “. . . [T]here wrestled a *man* with him [Jacob] until the breaking of the day” (Genesis 32:24, italics supplied).

5. The Lord appeared to Moses at the burning bush in the Sinai desert and expressed his name, YHWH (*Ehyeh asher Ehyeh*), which means “I WILL BE/BECOME/EFFECT WITH YOU” (Exodus 3:1ff.).<sup>2</sup> There is profound significance in this unique name. The name of God is not a noun but a verb — of ongoing action.<sup>3</sup> While God is One, he also is Three — signifying the relationality of God himself as inner Being, outer Becoming, and mediating, covenantal Effecting. God is not apart from us. Nor is God within us. Rather, God longs for “otherness” and thus is relationally *with* us.

6. The Lord communed with King David and gave him the design for the First Temple. This Temple was an explicit metaphor for a reclining, androgynous (male/female) parent preparing to give birth to a human infant.<sup>4</sup> In his compassionate (*racham* = womblike) relationality, the faithful God promised to become humanly embodied so that he might dwell (*skenoo* = tabernacle) with his people and with all mankind (John 1:14).

---

*The faithful God promised to become humanly embodied so that he might dwell with his people and with all mankind.*

---

7. Unlike the nations before them, around them and after them, the Hebrews of the wilderness Tabernacle and the First Temple embraced and worshiped the One-and-Only God as the primal Human God in faith and promise. The Hebrews knew that God was pre-existent. They knew that he was the One-and-Only Creator. They knew that he was initially unembodied. They believed that he would eventually become flesh (embodied) and thus a part of Creation. They believed that YHWH, as the Human One, would ride into Jerusalem on a donkey and become enthroned. (Zechariah 9:9). He would thus irrevocably and unconditionally embrace his own Creation and dwell with his people.

Therefore, for the early Hebrews, God was, in faith and promise, the Human God — the anthropic God of all relationality. He was thus unlike all presumed gods before or since. God would not be transcendent to his people. He would not be immanent within them. He would not be the ground beneath them. Rather, he would *be, become* and *effect* relationally *with* them.

## Endnotes

1. Prior to this withdrawal, mankind was controlled by an internal “god-consciousness” in which human will and authority were represented by the *symbolic* appearance and voice of “god,” expressed by the right brain (left brain in left-handed people). See Julian Jaynes, *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1990).
2. See “The Name of God,” at <http://www.bluethread.com/ehyeh.htm>: “Martin Buber muses that ‘Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh’ has a special meaning because of what happens almost immediately before and after it appears in the Torah. He notes that God makes a promise before revealing his name: ‘But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and free the Israelites from Egypt?” And He said, I will be with you . . . ’ (Exodus 3:11-12) and repeats it soon afterward:  

And the Lord said to him,  
‘Who gives man speech?  
Who makes him dumb or deaf,  
seeing or blind?  
Is it not I, the Lord?  
Now go, and I will be with you . . . ’  
(Exodus 4:11-12)”
3. See Thorlief Boman, *Hebrew Thought Compared with Greek* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1960), pp. 38, 39.
4. See “The First Temple: United Monarchical Period,” *Outlook* (November 2001).

Copyright © 2005 Worldview Publications