

[R1161 : page 7]

OUR LORD'S AGE AT BAPTISM AND HIS PRE-EXISTENCE.

Central Falls, R.I.

BRO. C. T. RUSSELL; – In MILLENNIAL DAWN, Vol. II., on page 66, I find the following – "Which was at thirty years, according to the Law, under which he was born and to which he and every Jew was subject." Please show me – where the law is recorded that required Jesus or any prophet, priest, or Levite, to submit to the rite of immersion before beginning his office work.

Again, on page 107, last paragraph and ending on page 108, "Was made flesh." If Jesus of Nazareth was a pre-existent being, personally present with the Father ages before the creation of the world, how can he be the promised seed of the woman, who is to crush the serpent's head?

Perhaps you will answer through the TOWER. Yours in hope of speedy redemption, bought by the Woman's Seed.

R. L. J. _____.

DEAR BROTHER: – I see that you do not get the idea in the sentence to which you refer, on page 66, Vol. II. The passage reads thus: – "He was anointed with the holy spirit immediately on coming out of the water. This was when he had attained manhood's estate, which was at thirty years, according to the Law, under which he was born, and to which he and every Jew was subject, until he ended its dominion by fulfilling its conditions – nailing it to his cross." The claim here is simply that at the age of thirty years a man was considered of age, according to the law of God under which all Israel was placed.

No Levite was permitted to engage in the work of the tabernacle under thirty. (See Num. 4:3.) And so Christ did not begin the work of the antitypical tabernacle (the work of atonement) until he was thirty. (Luke 3:23.) Our Lord then symbolized his consecration by immersion, but *not* because he or any other Jew was commanded to do so. He there instituted this simple ceremony as a fitting symbol of his consecration even unto death, and his faith in Jehovah's power to raise him out of death.

It is uncertain at just what time immersion was instituted as a symbol of repentance and reform. John the Baptist used it thus, and it is claimed followed a custom, for some time in vogue among Jewish reformers. Our Lord Jesus, however, gave immersion a wider and a deeper meaning than any other teacher when he, with no sins to repent of or to reform from, was immersed. It there came to be the symbol of *entire consecration* to God's will; a symbol of death in God's service and of a resurrection reward – a symbol of the death of human self-will and of the beginning of a life entirely conformed to the will of God.

With reference to your last question – "How could the pre-existent one be the promised seed of the woman?" – permit me to suggest that whether you or I can understand *how*, or not, if we have faith in God's Word, we must admit the *fact*. There are many facts the philosophy of which we cannot understand, as for instance, the growth and development of plant and animal life. We cannot understand the philosophy of the first creation, nor of the resurrection, the new creation. There are some facts, you see, which are beyond the scope of human reasoning. That our Lord had a pre-existence, we are most positively assured by the following scriptures: – John 6:38, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." Verse 51, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven." Verses 61,62, "Jesus said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?" John 8:14,23,42,54,55, "I know whence I came and whither

I go....I am from above, I am not of this world;...I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. ...It is my Father that honoreth me, and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar."

"Then said the Pharisees, Art thou greater than our father Abraham? Jesus answered, 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? (who had been dead 2000 years). Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." John 8:53,56-58. See also John 17:5, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." Here he only asked to be restored to what he was before; but the Father, in rewarding his obedience even unto death, "highly exalted him," far beyond that previous glory. See also 2 Cor. 8:9; Phil. 2:7; Rev. 1:8; 3:14; 21:6; 22:13 and Col. 1:15-17.

The Scriptures are also clear in their testimony that he was "the seed of the woman," of which you are convinced. And since the facts are established on God's authority, the *how* is to us a minor matter. If you have the TOWER for Sept. 1885 notice article "The Unfiled One." I think it will help you. Our supply of this number is exhausted, but we hope to treat the subject in all its revealed and its reasonable phases in DAWN, Vol. IV.
