

Was Jesus the “Agent” of Creation?

Introduction

One of the common idioms that existed in the ancient Hebrew culture was the concept of “agency”. Basically, in that culture, one person (the “principal”) would frequently commission **another** person (the “agent”), to *act on his behalf*.

Of course, this concept of “agency” is also present in our *current* culture. For example, if a person is granted the “power of attorney”, then that gives the person the ability to act on someone *else’s* behalf.

However, there is another item to note about this concept of “agency”. In the ancient Hebrew culture, the actions of an agent are often *attributed* to the principal. In other words, if an *agent* performs some action, then the Hebrews might say that the *principal* actually performed it.

For example, in the ancient Hebrew culture, if James bought a herd of goats, while he was operating as the “agent” of John, then the Hebrews might say that *John* actually bought the goats.

Examples of Agency

There are numerous examples of this concept of “agency” in Scripture. Here are two of them:

- The centurion’s servant:

Matthew 8:5-6 (ESV):

⁵ When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help. ⁶ “Lord,” he said, “my servant lies at home paralyzed, suffering terribly.”

Luke 7:3-5 (ESV):

³When the centurion heard about Jesus, he sent to him elders of the Jews, asking him to come and heal his servant. ⁴ When they came to Jesus, they pleaded earnestly with him, “This man deserves to have you do this, ⁵ because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue.”

Both of the above passages refer to the same event - the request that a centurion made to Jesus, to heal his servant. However, there is a difference between those two passages: The passage in Luke states that the *elders of the Jews* made the request to Jesus; while the passage in Matthew states that the *centurion*, himself, made the request.

This is explained by the concept of agency. The elders were operating as the “agents” of the centurion - and therefore, their actions can be *attributed* to the centurion (the “principal”). This explains why the passage in Matthew states that the centurion, himself, made the request - even though the passage in Luke tells us that the elders *actually* made the request.

- The request of James and John:

Mark 10:35-37 (ESV):

³⁵ And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came up to him and said to him, “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.” ³⁶ And he said to them, “What do you want me to do for you?” ³⁷ And they said to him, “Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.”

Matthew 20:20-21 (ESV):

²⁰ Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to him with her sons, and kneeling before him she asked him for something. ²¹ And he said to her, “What do you want?” She said to him, “Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom.”

Both of the above passages discuss the request of James and John, to sit at Jesus’ right and left hands. However, the passage in Matthew states that their *mother* actually made that request to Jesus; while the passage in Mark states that *James and John*, themselves, made the request.

Again, this is explained by the concept of agency. The mother was operating as the “agent” of James and John - and as a result, her actions can be *attributed* to James and John.

Jesus as God’s “agent”

This principle of agency also applies to Jesus, in some cases. For example, consider these two passages:

Isaiah 43:11 (ESV):

¹¹ I, I am the LORD (YHWH),
and besides me there is no savior.

1 John 4:14 (ESV):

¹⁴ And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.

The two passages above are a classic example of the concept of agency. The first passage tells us that *Yahweh*, alone, is our savior. However, the second passage tells us that God sent *Jesus* to be the savior of the world. In other words, Jesus was acting as the *agent* of God, when he was crucified for us.

So, even though Jesus was *actually* crucified (and is thus our savior), God is spoken of as our savior - because Jesus was *acting on God’s behalf*.

In other words, Jesus did what God wanted him to do, so that *we* would have the ability to be saved. In fact, Jesus himself states that fact:

Mark 10:45 (ESV) - Jesus speaking:

⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

(See also Matthew 20:28)

The “Pattern” of Agency

From the examples listed above, there is a definite “pattern” that can be seen, with regard to the concept of agency. In particular, the following items are *always* present, in those examples of agency:

- In some verses, the “principal”, himself, states that *he* performed an action;
- In other verses, the “agent”, himself, states that **he** actually performed the action in question.

All three of the examples of “agency”, above, display that same pattern:

First example - Matthew 8:5-6 and Luke 7:3-5:

- In Matthew 8, the centurion (the “principal”) asks Jesus to heal his servant;
- In Luke 7, the elders (the “agent”) *actually* ask Jesus to heal the servant.

Second example: Mark 10:35-37 and Matthew 20:20-21:

- In Mark 10, James and John (the “principal”) make the request to Jesus;
- In Matthew 20, their mother (the “agent”) *actually* makes the request to Jesus.

Third example: Isaiah 43:11, 1 John 4:14 and Mark 10:45:

- In Isaiah 43, Yahweh states that He (the “principal”), alone, is our savior;
- In Mark 10, Jesus states that he (the “agent”) is *actually* our savior - because of the crucifixion.

Did Jesus actually create the universe?

Some groups say that this concept of “agency” is *also* used in reference to the *creation of the universe*. Basically, some groups assert that *Jesus* actually created the universe - and that he was operating as the “agent” of Yahweh when he did so.

As noted above, a very definite pattern can usually be seen, when Scripture uses the concept of agency. So, if Jesus *actually* created the universe - while he was acting as the “agent” of Yahweh - then we would expect to see both of the following items in Scripture:

- In some verses, Yahweh, himself, states that He created the universe;
- In some *other* verses, Jesus, himself, states that he *actually* created the universe.

So, the question is, do **both** of the above items appear in Scripture?

There certainly *are* verses in which Yahweh states that He created the universe:

Isaiah 44:24 (ESV):

²⁴Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer,
who formed you from the womb:
“I am the LORD, who made all things,
who alone stretched out the heavens,
who spread out the earth by myself,

Job 38:1-4 (ESV):

¹Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said:
²“Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? ³ Dress for action like a man;
I will question you, and you make it known to me.

⁴“Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?
Tell me, if you have understanding.

However, are there any verses in which Jesus, himself, states that he actually created the universe? No! Jesus **never** stated that he created the universe, anywhere in Scripture!

So, the belief that Jesus created the universe does not fit the “pattern” of agency, that we see elsewhere in Scripture. As a result, in my opinion that belief is rather suspect. (After all, if Jesus wanted us to believe that he actually created the universe, then why didn’t he just tell us that?)

Note: there are a couple of verses which state that God created the universe “through” Jesus. However, those verses do *not* say that Jesus actually created the universe. Instead, those verses appear to state the following: God created the universe all by himself - but He had Jesus “in mind” when He did so.

In other words, all of God’s creative activities were done *in preparation for Jesus*. (That is apparently what 1 Peter 1:20 indicates.)

Conclusion

There are certainly many examples of “agency” in Scripture - in which the “agent” *actually* performs an action, but the “principle” is *spoken of* as doing the action. However, in most of those examples, the agent, himself, states that he performed the action, in Scripture.

So, if *Jesus* actually created the universe - while operating as the *agent* of God - then we would expect to see at least one verse in which Jesus, himself, states that he created the universe. However, there is no such verse - Scripture does not contain *any* verses, in which Jesus states that *he* actually created the universe.

As a result, in my opinion the evidence for Jesus being the “agent” of creation is rather weak.

Not only that, but there are a number of verses in Scripture which indicate that Jesus did not personally exist, until God caused Mary to conceive. For example, 1 Peter 1:20, 2 Samuel 7:12, Luke 1:30-35, and Deuteronomy 18:15-18 - among others - indicate to me that Jesus did not *personally* exist, until he was born to Mary.

Of course, if Jesus did *not* personally exist, *until* God caused Mary to conceive, then Jesus could *not possibly* have been the “agent” of creation - because he did *not exist* at the time that God created the universe! In other words, in order to believe that Jesus was the agent of creation, you *first* have to believe that Jesus *personally existed*, at the time that the universe was created.

Overall, the preponderance of the evidence indicates to me that Jesus was not the “agent of creation” - both because Jesus *never stated* that he created the universe, and because there are many Scriptural passages which imply that Jesus did not *personally* exist, *until* he was born to Mary.