



# **The Nature of Jesus Christ**

**Bible  
Digest  
Series**

**By  
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### *Did Jesus Pre-Exist?*

THERE are a few passages of Scripture that, if taken out of their context and not examined in light of the complete revelation of Scripture, would seemingly favor pre-existence. (For example, John 17:5.) Pre-existence, like the doctrine of heaven at death, is man's effort to improve God's plan. Some simply refuse to believe in a Saviour that came into existence about two thousand years ago. God's plan, however, does not need improving; it needs to be preached and taught. The Bible will carry its own weight when preached in fullness and power.

By the surface reading of a few texts, one might believe in predestination. But, if we study thoroughly, we will see those texts teach only God's foreknowledge. Likewise is it with pre-existence. The texts that seem to favor it really teach that Jesus was always in God's plan.

People who believe in pre-existence, according to my understanding, do not believe that Jesus is eternal. If one asks them when He was begotten, they reply, "We don't know." Indeed the Bible answers this question plainly. According to Luke 1, the Holy Spirit overshadowed Mary, and she conceived. Jesus was begotten at that time—about nine months before He was born.

### *Who Is Jesus Christ?*

The nature and identity of Christ is vitally important for a correct view of God's plan of salvation. In the re-

ligious world today, there are at least three answers to our question. Two of them are false; only one is true.

Some would have us believe that Jesus is God—"very God of very God," as it is sometimes stated. These contenders further tell us that Jesus was Creator of everything. However, the Bible teaches that God is one, and only one person is God. There can be only one Almighty. One of the great doctrines of the Jewish religion, as well as of Christianity, is that of one God. "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord" (Deut. 6:4).

There are others who take the other extreme, and say that Jesus was just another good man, "as was supposed the son of Joseph" (Luke 3:23). Had Jesus been the Son of Joseph, He would have had no power to save Himself, let alone anyone else. All of Adam's descendants have sinned and come short of the glory of God. All deserve death. But these things cannot be said of Jesus. (1 Pet. 2:21-23.) Christ was sinless and completely adequate to pay the price of our salvation. As far as the identity of our Lord is concerned, Peter's great confession is still unsurpassed, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16).

A hundred and twenty times it is said in the New Testament that Jesus is the Son of God. Our salvation hinges on the authenticity of this statement. Jesus is divine, but God alone is deity. The word "divine" is defined as follows: 1) "of or pertaining to God; 2) appropriated to God, or celebrating His praise; religious; holy; 3) per-

taining to or proceeding from a deity; 4) godlike; heavenly; supremely admirable.” We surely believe that Jesus is divine. However, He is not God; He is not Melchisedec; He is not an angel; He is not Michael. Jesus is the only begotten Son of God, conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary. He was made lower than the angels. Why? “For the suffering of death” (Heb. 2:9). The Son of God was made a mortal person, but He was raised from the dead to immortality and exalted above every name that is named.

Jesus Christ, moreover, is unique. He is in a class all by Himself. No man ever was born, lived, worked, taught, died, and was resurrected like Jesus. God is in heaven; man is on the earth. Jesus Christ is the only connecting link between the two. “There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5).

When the Bible writers speak of the creation of the universe, it is plain that God did the creating. He created all things “alone” and “by myself” (Isa. 44:24). However, God has given to Christ the work of building the church. Because of His obedience, God has entrusted to Him the work of judgment, redemption, resurrection, etc. Jesus is to the church what the Father is to the whole world. Jesus is the one through whom all spiritual blessings flow.

### *Birth or Incarnation*

The birth of Jesus is one of the most wonderful events

of all the ages. How He made His entrance into the world, however, is a question upon which there is a great difference of opinion. Was He born? or incarnated?

No form of the word "incarnation" can be found in Scripture. It is defined as follows: "Invested with flesh or bodily nature and form: embodied in human form; state of being clothed with flesh; a person, animal, or other being embodying a spirit or deity." No wonder the inspired writers avoided the use of this term! Incarnation is a teaching of paganism and superstition. In many heathen nations the king was thought to be an incarnation of their god.

On the other hand, the Bible writers frequently use the words "birth" and "born" when speaking of the first advent of Jesus. These two words are defined as follows: "act or fact of coming into life; act of bringing forth; origin; beginning; brought into existence."

The theme of Old Testament writings was the birth of Israel's Messiah, the first promise being in Genesis 3:15. Writing seven or eight centuries before Jesus was born, the Prophet Isaiah wrote, "Unto us a child is *born*" (9:6). The virgin was to *bear* the son. (7:14.) When the angel made the announcement to the shepherds, he said, "Unto you is *born* this day . . . a Saviour" (Luke 2:11). Mary "*brought forth*" her first-born son. (Matt. 1:25.) The angel told Mary that she would "*bring forth* a Son" (Luke 1:31). If these terms do not mean what they say, why are they used?

Any student who is seeking truth will observe that the word “born” and synonymous expressions correctly give the true meaning of the origin of our Saviour. Jesus was not God clothed with flesh, but rather, “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself” (2 Cor. 5:19). Jesus was a mortal man who died for our sins. His birth, moreover, was the result of a miraculous conception. After that He was born in a natural way and cared for in a natural way. Incarnation has no foundation in Scripture.

The birth and true nature of Christ are doctrines on which the Church of God stands almost alone. Nearly all other groups have accepted pre-existence, or the trinity, or both. Obviously, one cannot believe in both pre-existence and the birth of Christ; one cannot believe that Jesus was born, and still hold to the pagan teaching of incarnation. To believe both is a contradiction of terms.

Furthermore, the New Testament is replete with evidence that Jesus was made. “When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, *made* of a woman” (Gal. 4:4). Nowhere is it said that Jesus was remade, or that His physical nature was changed except by resurrection. He “*being made* . . . obtained a more excellent name” than the angels. (Heb. 1:4.) “He took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham” (2:16). Moreover, He was “*made* like unto his brethren” (v. 17).

Now the question naturally arises, How was Jesus made? The whole testimony of Scripture answers that

He was *begotten* by God and *born* of a woman. Man had nothing to do with bringing Jesus into existence. The process was between God and the woman.

### *Why I believe in Immortality*

The supreme hope of all saints is eternal life in the new earth made free from sin. We look forward to the time when we will possess immortality. In this life we are seeking it. (Rom. 2:7.) We are assured of it, but only if we meet the conditions, and only at the time of Jesus' return. Natural immortality may be popular, but it is untrue.

God is the Eternal. (Psa. 90:1, 2.) He is the only one who has always existed. Moreover, He has demonstrated that eternal life is possible for mortal man by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. If Jesus were eternal, God has never established the fact of resurrection to immortality. If Jesus already had immortality, how did God bestow this priceless gift upon Him? The New Testament writers tell us repeatedly that He did just that. Belief in Jesus' resurrection, moreover, is necessary for one's salvation. (Rom. 10:9, 10.) Our hope hinges upon this historical event.

Jesus was human in nature, but He was divine in character. He was a mortal man; He died; He had flesh and bones; His blood was spilled. First Corinthians 15 makes it plain that Christ first possessed a natural body, and later a spiritual body. "The first man Adam was made



a living soul [or person]; the last Adam [Christ] was made a quickening spirit [a life-giving person]. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man [Christ] is the Lord from heaven" (1 Cor. 15:45-47). Hence, it is evident that Jesus came into existence after Adam. Pre-existence reverses this order. Careful students should reject it. Jesus ranks before Adam, but He is after Adam in time. He first had a mortal body, and later received an immortal one. Evidently there was a time when Jesus did not exist.

Furthermore, the same order is set forth for us. "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (1 Cor. 15:48, 49). Yes, first we have a body of clay like Adam, but when Jesus comes we will possess a glorified body like Christ. (Phil. 3:20, 21.) Our assurance rests in the fact that Jesus followed this course. To say that Jesus had immortality, and in the same breath say that He died, is a very glaring inconsistency.

In the next place, the glory that Jesus had "before the world was" is often used to prove pre-existence. (John 17:5.) However, the ones who hold this view fail to see that the disciples had also received this glory. "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them" (v. 22). Did

the disciples pre-exist? Has the church been glorified? All students know that the glorification of the church lies in the world to come. Indeed, the glory Jesus mentioned was prospective. Besides, John 7:37-39 mentions the fact that "Jesus was not yet glorified," and Peter reminds us of the "sufferings of Christ, and the *glory that should follow*" (1:11). Doubtless, Jesus first suffered and then was glorified. For Christ and His followers the order is first the cross and then the crown. Again, pre-existence reverses this order. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into [not re-enter] his glory" (Luke 24:26). When we look at the whole Bible, it is plain that Jesus first suffered and then was glorified, which makes pre-existence impossible.

Furthermore, we must remember that the style of writing in the Bible is different from any other book. God sees His plan completed and speaks as if all things were accomplished. For example, Isaiah 53 speaks of the death of Christ in the past tense. He also speaks of Jesus' birth in the present tense (9:6); yet Isaiah lived about seven and one-half centuries before Christ. Anyone familiar with Scripture must admit that much of the Bible is written that way. God sees the church glorified and the Kingdom established, and speaks as if these things were already realities. He "callesh those things which be not as though they were" (Rom. 4:17).

Scripture says that Jesus is "heir of all things" (Heb. 1:2). Therefore He could not be the Creator. One can-

not own something and be an heir of it at the same time. All things belong to Jehovah. Jesus, as God's only begotten Son, is heir of everything. We, as Christians, become joint-heirs with Him. (Rom. 8:17.) We are told repeatedly that there is only one God. We understand the term "one God" to mean that God is one Person. Evidently Jesus believed that, too. Said He. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

Perhaps we should mention that the reason we do not believe in pre-existence and the trinity is not that we cannot understand them. We do not believe them because God has never asked us to. Not once are we asked to believe in pre-existence or the trinity. We are asked to believe that Jesus is God's Son, that He died, and rose again.

The creation of Revelation 3:14 is the new creation of which Jesus is the Head. "If any one is in Christ, he is a new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17, R.S.V.). Hence, we have two creations mentioned in Scripture. Adam is the head of the old, and Jesus is the firstfruits of the new. (1 Cor. 15:20.) Certainly Jesus was in God's blueprint back in Genesis, but He came into existence when He was born.

If Jesus pre-existed His birth literally, His birth was a hoax. If He already had immortality, His resurrection was another hoax, and His death would have been impossible. Moreover, we would have no cause to believe that we will ever possess immortality. However, Scrip-

ture says that Jesus “brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Tim. 1:10). How did He accomplish this? Through His death and resurrection. His resurrection assures our resurrection. This is why I believe in immortality.

*“That spiritual Rock that followed them”* (1 Cor. 10:4)

**I**N First Corinthians 10:1-4, Paul gives three types that are found in the wandering of the Israelites—crossing the Red Sea, the manna, and the “spiritual Rock.” Believers in the trinity and pre-existence generally take two of them as types, and the third one literally. Scripture will not allow that kind of handling.

Crossing the Red Sea is a picture of baptism. The sea parted, the cloud hovered over them, and the Israelites crossed on dry land. Israel then started her journey toward the Promised Land. The Israelites were baptized “unto Moses”; that is, into the law covenant of which he was mediator. Christians are baptized into Christ. (Rom. 6:35.) Jesus is to us what Moses was to Israel.

In the next place, the manna (“spiritual meat,” v. 3), which was provided supernaturally, was a type of Christ, “the bread of life.” “Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from

heaven, and giveth life unto the world” (John 6:31-33). Jesus came from heaven exactly as the manna did. (V. 51.) Did the manna originate literally in heaven? Of course not! God’s power reached down and produced it. Likewise, His Spirit moved upon the virgin, and the birth of the Christ Child was the result.

Certainly, Jesus is the true bread; the manna was only a type. He was not actually made of bread. His teachings were the true bread. Jesus further emphasized that if one does not eat His flesh and drink His blood, he can have no eternal life. (Vv. 53-58.) The Jews and some of His disciples failed to understand Him because they thought He was speaking literally. (Study Vv. 41, 42, 52, 60, 66.) We should make sure that we profit by their mistakes. Christ simply meant that we must digest His teachings and make them a part of us, if we are to live forever.

Once more, “that spiritual Rock that followed them” is also a type of Christ. Without the water from the rock in the wilderness, Israel would have perished. Likewise, all who fail to partake of Christ and His teachings will perish in the second death. As the manna and crossing of the Red Sea were constant reminders of the power of God, so was the water that God produced from the rock. Belief in God was the spiritual rock of which they drank. They looked forward to Christ as the Rock. (1 Pet. 2:7, 8.)

Jesus told the woman of Samaria that if one would drink of the water He had, that person would never thirst. He was not actually talking about water. As might

be expected, that was the subject under discussion at the well. He was talking about faith in God and in His Son Jesus Christ. Unless we understand these simple figures of speech, we shall be like Nicodemus, who was a leader in Israel and yet could not understand Jesus' simple teachings.

The rock in the wilderness, moreover, did not move. It represented Christ and His gospel. As their baptism was typical of the true, so the spiritual rock that followed them was typical of Jesus who was born of Mary in Bethlehem centuries later. Jesus proceeded forth and came from God (John 8:42) as all sons come from their fathers. His origin, teachings, and ideals were all of God. To the Jews He said, "Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world" (John 8:23). However, Jesus was no more literally from above than the Jews were literally from beneath. His origin was of God, who is in heaven. Jesus Christ was not under the curse of this world in any way.

The Son of God also said, "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven" (John 3:13). These words were spoken at the beginning of His earthly ministry when He had not literally ascended, yet He spoke in the present tense. Why should one believe that He literally descended? Jesus also spoke of ascending up where He was before, obviously referring to His resurrection. (John 6:62.)

We all have sinned in Adam, but we did not pre-exist. Levi paid tithes to Melchisedec, but he did not live in the generation of Melchisedec. (Heb. 7:9, 10.) If we keep in mind that Jesus is the center of God's plan, and that God's plan has been from the beginning, we will have little trouble. Jesus is our Shepherd and Guide; He leads us in green pastures and by still waters.

### *The "Logos" Is Not a Person*

The first chapter of John's gospel has long been a favorite passage for support of the trinity and pre-existence. The argument is built upon the Greek word *logos*. This word occurs three hundred seventeen times in the Greek New Testament.

What does *logos* mean? It is translated in the New Testament as follows: Account, 8 times; cause, 1; communication, 3; doctrine, 1; game, 1; intent, 1; matter, 4; mouth, 1; preaching, 1; question, 1; reason, 2; rumor, 1; saying, 50; thing, 1; show, 1; speech, 8; talk, 1; thing, 4; things to say, 1; tidings, 1; treatise, 1; utterance, 4; word, 208; Word, 7; words, 4; speech, 1; work, 2; do, 1. One observes immediately that there is no thought of personality in any of these terms.

"It thus becomes clear that the word *logos* has for its primary meanings 'thought,' 'word,' 'speech,' 'reason,' from the moment of its conception as an idea in the mind of the person to its realization in actual speech and promise fulfilled. The importance of the subject makes it

worth-while stating that God's Word was 'with' God just as truly as my word is *with* me and cannot be regarded independently of me. In this sense we continually recognize the *words* of another to be *representative of him*, though in bodily presence he may be thousands of miles distant." (*One God: God of the Ages*, by R. H. Judd.) Likewise Jesus was in God's plan and mind from the beginning, but He came into existence about two thousand years ago.

"In the beginning was the *logos*, and the *logos* was with God, and the *logos* was God. This was in the beginning with God. Through it every thing was done; and without it not even one thing was done, which has been done. In it was life; and the life was the light of men" (John 1:1-4, Diag.). Since the *logos* is not a person, this is one of the better translations. Jesus does not enter the picture literally until verse 14 where we read that, "The *logos* became flesh." Notice that Jesus did not come down from heaven as an immortal person, but that God's Word *became* flesh. The *logos* did not become part flesh and part God, not merely clothed with flesh, but became or now was flesh.

Concerning the word *logos*, Dr. Adam Clarke wrote, "This term should be left untranslated for the very same reasons the names *Jesus* and *Christ* are left untranslated. As every appellation of the Saviour of the world was descriptive of some excellence in His person, nature, or work, so the epithet *logos*, which signifies a word spoken,

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speech, eloquence, doctrine, reason, or the faculty of reasoning is very properly applied to Him.”

Surely God created by His Word. He spoke the creation into existence. “By the *word* of the Lord were the heavens made. . . . For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast” (Psa. 33:6, 9). In the beginning God’s Word became earth, moon, sun, etc. Likewise in the New Testament, God’s Word became flesh. It became flesh in the Person of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Alpha and Omega of God’s plan of salvation. All things in the church are done by, for, and through Him. It does not say in John 1, moreover, “In the beginning was Jesus,” but rather, “In the beginning was the Word [*logos*].” Perhaps no one word fully expresses the meaning of *logos*. It means “A word spoken, speech, doctrine, reason, thought expressed, and wisdom.” (*The World’s Redemption*, Thomas Williams.) What does it refer to in John’s Gospel? It evidently refers to God’s plan, which included a Son begotten by Himself and born of a woman. All things have been provided by one great Creator. This plan hinges upon His Son Jesus Christ.

Once more, wisdom is personified in Proverbs 8, but no one believes that wisdom is a person. The first two verses will convince one that wisdom is the subject of the chapter. “I wisdom dwell with prudence” (v. 12). “The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. . . . When he pre-

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pared the heavens, I was there” (vv. 23, 24, 27). These verses do not refer to Christ. God’s wisdom has always been with Him. At the same time, Jesus is a part of God’s wisdom. (1 Cor. 1:21-24.) His wisdom, however, is not a person any more than His love, mercy, or power. These are all attributes of God, not separate entities.

As wisdom is spoken of in Proverbs 8, so John spoke of the *logos*. Peter uses the same term. “By the word [*logos*] of God the heavens were of old” (2 Pet. 3:5). God’s Word is a part of Him as much as your word is a part of you, but your word is not a separate person. The wisdom of God is said to have spoken, but wisdom cannot really speak. (Luke 11:49.)

Jesus used the word “*logos*” often. “He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings [*logos*]: and the word [*logos*] which ye hear is not mine, but the Father’s which sent me” (John 14:24). God could not literally be present, but His Word was in the mouth of His Son. Jesus recognized His dependence upon the Father. Said He, “The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do” (John 5:19). Christ always gave God credit for His words. Jesus was inferior to God in knowledge. He did not know the time of His return. (Mark 13:32.) He “increased in wisdom” which is impossible for one who knows all. (Luke 2:52.)

Moreover, *logos* is translated *doctrine* in Hebrews 6:1. Believers are to go on to perfection after knowing the basic “doctrine [*logos*] of Christ.” If *logos* is Christ, it

would read, “the Christ of Christ,” which is absurd. This word is also found in Romans 9:9. “This is the word [*logos*] of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son.” A part of God’s plan was the birth of Isaac. He was a son of promise, too, but he was not in the class with Christ. Certainly the *logos* is the mind, reason, speech, and wisdom of God.

“If Jesus the Christ pre-existed His birth by Mary as a living, organized Personality, necessity demands that such Personality must have ceased (died) before the birth of the second Personality spoken of could be consummated. With that granted, there opens up a Scriptural argument against pre-existence that cannot be overthrown. Frequently in Scripture it is asserted that Christ died *once* — ‘once for all.’ (See Rom. 6:10, R.V.; 1 Pet. 3:18, R.V.; also Heb. 9:26.) Consequently, the thought here is that if He pre-existed, He must have died twice. Any doctrine that involves the denial of the Scriptural statement that Christ died ‘once’ must be erroneous.” (*One God: God of the Ages*, R. H. Judd.)

Furthermore, God manifest in the flesh (“He who was manifest,” R.V.) is called a mystery. (1 Tim. 3:16.) We understand this text to teach that God revealed Himself through His Son. We can see infinite wisdom in this arrangement. “It clearly indicates that the Lord Jesus Christ was a God-development. He was of divine origin. . . . The human and divine were beautifully blended together. He was a manifestation of divine power upon earth. The

Father dwelt in the Son.” (*The Words of Eternal Life*, J. O. Woodruff.) We see in Jesus the beginning of the divine creation. (Rev. 3:14.) We, through Jesus, partake of the divine nature. As a Son, Jesus possessed the divine attributes. Our title of Sonship, moreover, comes through Him.

## CONCLUSION

### *From the Foundation of the World*

THIS phrase is used ten times in the New Testament. The word “foundation” in this phrase comes from the Greek word *katabole* and means “a casting or laying down; founding.” Jesus, in parables, revealed things that had “been kept secret from the foundation of the world” (Matt. 13:34, 35). God’s plan of the New Testament church, the body of Christ, was not specifically revealed in Old Testament times, but it was always in His mind. Since Jesus is the Head of the church, we would expect Him to have been included in this plan. He was! Although the Kingdom is in the future, it was prepared for the saved “from the foundation of the world” (Matt. 25:34).

Jesus, in His high priestly prayer, said, “Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world” (John 17:24). Parents love their children before they are born. Likewise, God loved Jesus when His plan was brought into existence. “Gospel benefits made possible by Christ’s sacrifice were known to God from the beginning and were included in His plan of salvation. . . . When God created our planet, He knew that some day His Son would be born here, give Himself as man’s Sacrifice, rise from the dead, ascend to heaven, and later return to rule over all nations.”—*A. Huffer*.

“According as he hath chosen *us* in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love” (Eph. 1:4). Notice that the church here is spoken of as being chosen before the foundation of the world. Yet, no one believes that the church pre-existed. Since God spoke of the church as already known to Him, we would expect Him to speak also of Jesus who is the center, the hub, the foundation of the church. As it is written, Jesus was “foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you” (1 Pet. 1:20). Yes, in the beginning Jesus was in God’s plan, but He was manifest when He was born of Mary.

Once more, Scripture says that Jesus was “slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8). Was Jesus slain back in Genesis? Doubtless, all students know that Christ died on Calvary four thousand years after Adam.

The sin question, however, was settled back in Genesis. In God's mind Jesus had already died. We are being saved today by the plan that originated and was prepared for man before the world began.

Before Isaac was born God said to Abraham, "A father of many nations have I made thee" (Gen. 17:5). Notice the past tense. This is just another time when God spoke as if His plan had been accomplished, although in reality it had not been. God's plan is progressive. The faithful of the Old Testament looked forward to Jesus' birth. The complete revelation came with His birth, death, and glorious resurrection. God is so true to His Word that He can speak as if future events have already taken place. He has done this repeatedly in Scripture.

### *Before Abraham Was, I Am*

This statement from the lips of our Lord is frequently misused as proof of pre-existence. Observe that Jesus did not say, "Before Abraham was I was," but "Before Abraham was born, I am he" (Diag.). The word translated "before" means "formerly." In other words, Jesus reminded the Jews that they had formerly trusted in Abraham. He also pointed out to them that no salvation was promised in Abraham but in Abraham's seed, the Christ. (Gal. 3:16.) Since they were descendants of Abraham, they felt that God owed them salvation. "We have Abraham to our father" was their self-righteous response to the message of John the Baptist. His rebuke was similar to that

of Christ. “God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham” (Matt. 3:9). Both Jesus and John were emphasizing that national descent carries no weight as far as salvation is concerned. The righteousness that counts with God is faith in Jesus Christ.

In the next place, Jesus said to the Jews, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad” (John 8:56). Did Abraham see that day? Did he live during Christ’s earthly ministry? Surely there is no thought of pre-existence here. Abraham, along with the other faithful ones of the Old Testament, saw Christ’s day “afar off” (Heb. 11:13). Through types, shadows, and symbols, the “scripture . . . preached before the gospel unto Abraham” (Gal. 3:8).

Indeed, Jesus was in God’s plan before Abraham was—all the way back to Genesis 3:15. Abraham was revealed later as a part of God’s progressive plan. He lived about two thousand years after Adam and about two thousand years before Christ. Since Jesus was the seed of Abraham, He had to come into existence after Abraham. Since He was the seed of David, He came into existence after David. Jesus was the seed of the woman, moreover, not creator of her. God brought His Son into the world by the woman—not the other way around. Pre-existence reverses all this. Which comes first, the woman or the descendant of the woman? Common sense is the best guard against the false doctrine of pre-existence, when it is coupled with the Word of God.



Moreover, "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman" (Gal. 4:4). Since Jesus was made of a woman, how could He have lived before He was so made? Supporters of pre-existence have never satisfactorily answered this question. God has chosen, by the Holy Scripture, to reveal the nature and origin of His only begotten Son. Man does a great injustice when he enshrouds these wonderful truths with obscurity, speculation, and human philosophy. The fact that Jesus was made "perfect through suffering" (Heb. 2:10) proves that He did not pre-exist His birth. If He had, He would have already been perfect.

Certainly, Jesus was raised up from the midst of Israel. (Deut. 18:15.) "It is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda" (Heb. 7:14). He came forth as a "rod out of the stem of Jesse" (Isa. 11:1). Yes, Scripture teaches beyond doubt that the Messiah had His origin in Judah.

Returning to Jesus' statement, "Before Abraham was, I am," we may well ask, "I am who?" The answer is obvious, is it not? I am He who was promised as the seed of the woman. "The child Jesus, knowing that He was the (*logos*) word or wisdom in the purpose of God, made flesh, and that all things were on account of Him, could well say, 'Before Abraham was I am'; that is, 'I am the purpose of God before Abraham was.' So of all kindred passages."—*J. H. Thomas*.

The burning question between the Jews and Christ concerned His Messiahship. They failed to recognize Him

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as the One around whom the whole Bible revolves. "He is present everywhere in all parts of the Bible. . . . He was from the beginning as the *logos*, in God, out of whom He came by begetting, and all that God has done for man has been by, in the sense of because of, Christ." —*Thomas Williams*. This is the sense in which Jesus has been "from everlasting" (Micah 5:2). He was in God's blueprint which was completed back in Genesis. Let us not be shocked when we read that Jesus is from everlasting.

Was Christ Creator? Some who correctly reject the trinity believe that Jesus assisted God in creation. We believe that this view is contrary to Isaiah 44:24 and Job 9:8, which tell us that God created all things alone and by Himself. Besides, Jesus taught that God was Creator. (Mark 13:19.) Those who hold the view that Christ was "co-Creator" refer to such texts as Ephesians 3:9, which says that God "created all things by Jesus Christ." Careful students know that the phrase "by Jesus Christ" is absent in the original Greek. Without this phrase, this verse harmonizes with all other texts showing that God alone was Creator. The prepositions "by," "for," and "through" carry the same thought. God created all things for the sake of, or because of Christ. All verses in this group can be explained in this way. Jesus was not Creator, but He is to be set over the works of God's hands. (Heb. 2:7.) Jesus was not an angel. (Heb. 2:9, 16.) Angels were not begotten. (Heb. 1:5.) Jesus was. Angels are immortal,

but Jesus died. God brought Jesus into the world to do something that God and angels could not do; namely, to die.

The Jews accused Jesus of claiming to be equal with God. (John 5:18, 19.) However, He made no such claim for Himself. Sonship does not necessitate equality with fatherhood. He was not equal with God in power and knowledge, but in righteousness and truth. Said He, "My Father is greater than I" (John 14:28).

Furthermore, some claim that because Jesus performed miracles and was raised from the dead, He must be God. That is faulty reasoning. Moses and other prophets performed amazing miracles without being God. So did the disciples. Peter raised Dorcas. (Acts 9.) We must be careful not to read into texts more than is there. Jesus' miracles and resurrection cannot be used to prove that He is God. The most that He ever claimed for Himself was that He was the Son of God. (John 10:36.) Moreover, God is Christ's Head. (1 Cor. 11:3.) Jesus is God's Christ. (3:23.)

We need never be ashamed of our position on the nature of Christ. When we realize that Jesus came into existence when He was born of Mary, as the result of a miraculous conception, it helps us to understand the true relationship that exists between Him and His Father. This relationship is simple and easy to understand, but most of all it is Scriptural.



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