

WHAT Was Jesus *Before* His Human Birth?

Did Christ actually exist prior to His birth of the virgin Mary? Was He God? Was He just Spiritual Essence? Was He born HUMAN, just as YOU are human?

by Garner Ted Armstrong

WHY SHOULD there be such confusion concerning the existence of Jesus Christ? In our western world of professing Christianity, we see nothing but religious confusion—*differences* and *debates*—over the one great focal point of all Christianity—Christ Himself!

Even learned theologians, it seems, cannot agree on *who*, or *what* was Christ before His birth! *Yet your own Bible is very plain on this subject!*

Are YOU one who is willing to ask GOD and not men, for the truth?

Jesus Had a Father

During His earthly ministry, Jesus Christ revealed a Father-Son relationship existing between Him and His heavenly Father. Throughout the Bible, God stresses the *family* relationship. First, between God the Father and the Son, and then between each begotten Christian and the Father. The Church is revealed as the *mother* of us all (Gal. 4:26). Individuals within the Church refer to each other as "brothers" and "sisters." Throughout God's revelation, He shows us that there is a *FAMILY* known as God!

Let's understand it!

The logical place to begin is in the *very beginning*, so get your Bible, and turn to Genesis, the first chapter. "In the beginning, *GOD* . . ." These are the very *FIRST* words that meet our eyes when we begin to find out *WHO*, or *WHAT is* God! In studying through the inspired account of the creation of all things, it becomes clear the creation was accomplished *not* by just *one* person, but by *MORE* than one! "And God said, let us make man in *OUR* image, after *OUR* likeness . . ." (Gen. 1:26). God was not like the absent-minded professor, who

was speaking to Himself—but was revealing a *PLURALITY* of persons, *MORE* than one, in the word appearing in your Bible as "God."

The Hebrew Proves It

The Hebrew word used for "God" in Gen. 1:1 and throughout the account of the creation is "ELOHIM" which actually means *more than one!* It is the plural form of the Hebrew word "El" or "Eloah" which can be correctly translated as "Mighty One." The *PLURAL* form, as used in your Bible, means "The Mighty *ONES*" or *MORE* than just one person.

ELOHIM is a *plural* word, showing more than one person—just as the words "group," or "church," or "family" are single words, which mean *more than one person!*

What's more—all other scriptures uphold and support this vital truth! Listen to the words of the inspired Apostle Paul, who said, "For by Him (Christ) were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in the earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, *ALL THINGS WERE CREATED BY HIM*, and for Him." Paul went on to say, "And He is *BEFORE* all things, and *BY HIM all things consist!*" (Col. 1:16-17). Was Paul just flattering Christ—was he simply adding spiritual-sounding phrases to make Christ seem more *magnified* to the Christians in his care? Certainly not! For "ALL SCRIPTURE is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (II Tim. 3:16).

If *all things* were *CREATED* by Christ, then He must have been *ONE* of the persons included in the Hebrew word

Elohim we read in Genesis 1:1.

Christ Before Adam

Strange though it may seem, there are *TWO* accounts of the "beginning" of all things given in your Bible! In the Gospel of John, chapter 1, a most vital passage gives us the clear, simple *TRUTH* of Christ's office *prior* to His human birth. "In the beginning was the Word," (John 1:1) Notice, "*In the beginning . . .*" There cannot be *TWO* beginnings—only *one*, so it is speaking of exactly the *same time* as Genesis 1:1. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was *with* God, and the Word *WAS* GOD!"

There is the vital truth still unseen by so many—and yet so *PLAINLY* revealed in your Bible!

The Greek word which is translated into the English as "Word" in John 1:1 is "LOGOS" which means, more literally, *spokesman*, or one who *speaks*. To continue: "The same was in the beginning *with* God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." (John 1:2-3) Yes, *EVERYTHING WAS MADE BY HIM*, by the *spokesman*, or the LOGOS, who became CHRIST, as we read in Colossians 1:16-17!

The Person in the God Family who later *became* Jesus Christ was the *One* who SAID [spoke], "Let US make man in *OUR* image," thus executing His awesome office as the very *EXECUTIVE* of the God *FAMILY*!

Notice how clearly John's Gospel states this truth—"And the Word [Logos] was *MADE FLESH and dwelt among us*, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). *WHO* was full of grace

and truth? ". . . grace and truth came by *Jesus Christ!*" (Verse 17).

Jesus Is Also God

Remember, the Bible *does not say* there is only ONE member in the God Family, but expresses a PLURALITY of persons—more than one! Otherwise Jesus would be a liar, for He prayed constantly to His *Father* who was in heaven!

Further light is shed on this commonly misunderstood subject in the wonderful book of Hebrews. Paul tells us, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us *by a Son* [Ivan Panin New Testament] whom He hath appointed HEIR of all things, *by whom also He made the worlds!*" It becomes self-evident, then, that Jesus Christ is the very CREATOR! And yet *millions* do not know, nor even faintly comprehend this amazing truth! Paul called Him "God our Saviour" (Tit. 1:3). And so—in the *person* of Jesus Christ, our very CREATOR became our Saviour! Christ is at once our Maker, and a member of the Godhead. Therefore, His life which He gave for us is of *far greater value* than the sum total of every living, breathing human being!

In order to pay the PENALTY for your sins and mine, which penalty is *death*—death for *all eternity* unless it is pardoned and washed away (Rom. 6:23), it was necessary that Christ be *Divine*—that His life be worth more than all our *human* lives put together! When Christ took our sins He paid the penalty we have incurred—*not* eternal life in hell-fire, but the cessation of life—DEATH! "Christ *died* for our sins according to the scriptures" (I Cor. 15:3). Jesus was MADE FLESH (John 1:14) and became a human being for this very purpose, that He might DIE on the cross for all mankind! And yet, if Christ were ONLY human, His life would have paid only the death penalty incurred by *one other human*. The penalty for every individual's sin had to be paid!

But remember, the penalty for sin is DEATH, and God cannot die! Therefore, the penalty is HUMAN life—and God of Himself could not have paid such a

penalty. It was absolutely necessary, then, that Christ be BOTH *human and Divine!*

The awe-inspiring mystery of God is not grasped in its overwhelming significance but by those who will *hunger and thirst* for God's truth! (Mat. 5:6). The *Logos*, the One who *spoke*, and CREATED by His very WORD, "*emptied Himself*" and took upon Him the form of a servant, and *was made* in the *likeness of men*, and being *found in fashion as a man*, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:7-8, margin).

The Divine Being who was instrumental in CREATING all things was *changed into human flesh!* Was Jesus human? YES, He was! Your very salvation depends on it!

Jesus Had HUMAN Nature

God came *in the flesh* as Jesus Christ, lived a perfect life, totally *without sin*, and thus was able to *die* and pay the full penalty of sin in our place! Jesus was God made into mortal flesh "*for the suffering of death*" (Heb. 2:9).

Past articles in *The Plain Truth* magazine have proved conclusively that Jesus Christ was HUMAN, that He DIED and was absolutely DEAD during the three days and three nights He was in the grave. "He also likewise (as the children are partakers of *flesh and blood*) took part of the *same*"—took on HUMAN NATURE — became flesh and blood—"that through *death* He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Hebrews 2:14).

Jesus constantly had to CRY OUT to God *day and night* to keep Himself from falling! MILLIONS of people, not understanding the tremendous *battle*, the life-long *struggle* Christ had with *Himself*, in overcoming His own human nature, the natural pulls of the flesh, *do not fully realize the extent of the sacrifice their Saviour made*, and in many cases are trusting in a FALSE SAVIOUR!

"For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in ALL POINTS tempted like as we are, yet without sin!" (Heb. 4:15). "Who in the days of His *flesh*, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong cryings and tears unto Him that

was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared!" (Heb. 5:7). Your very Saviour had to CRY ALOUD TO GOD, in strong crying and TEARS, to overcome Himself, to withstand the temptations of SIN, to finally die on the cross with the record of a PERFECT life! Are you WORTHY of this tremendous sacrifice?

Who Was the LORD of the Old Testament?

In the King James authorized version of the Bible, the word "LORD" is frequently used, and usually always in small capital letters. Wherever this word appears in the capital letters, it is translated from the Hebrew word "YHVH" commonly pronounced today as "Yahveh." The YHVH, when more correctly translated, implies "The ETERNAL" or the EVER-LIVING ONE, rather than "Lord."

Throughout the books of the Old Testament, the LORD appeared to various individuals, dealt particularly and personally with the ancient Israelites, and talked directly (though from the darkness of a cloud or the brightness of a fire) to Moses. This Person who spoke to Adam, to Enoch, and to Moses *was the One who later became Jesus Christ!*

Christ Himself said so!

"For the Father Himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. *You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His shape!*" (John 5:37). This almost universally mis-understood truth has led many people to repudiate the Old Testament, to cast aside the Laws of God as having no binding force on them today.

"But what of the transfiguration?" Yes, *what of the transfiguration?* The disciples, Peter, James and John, were with Jesus on a mountain, apart from the others, when a marvelous *vision* appeared—an actual *foretaste*, a view ahead into the soon-coming Kingdom of God! As the disciples stood, gazing with awe and wonder at the brilliance of the vision, there came a "voice out of the cloud, which said, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye Him'" (Mat. 17:5). But notice, did the scripture say it was God the Father who spoke? NO! *Read it in your own Bible!*

Many have carelessly assumed the

Bible says what it does not say! Notice this particular case, where a *voice* is heard speaking, and yet Christ Himself tells us it COULD NOT HAVE BEEN THE VOICE OF GOD! (John 5:37). The only logical conclusion in the light of all scripture is that an angel (messenger) spoke, as one bearing this message from the Father in heaven!

Since it was *not* God the Father who spoke to Moses, and Who even allowed Moses to see His hind parts (Ex. 33:23), then it had to be the Eternal Being who was instrumental in executing God's word! That was Christ's prior OFFICE, that was His all-important job! Who was the One who SPOKE to Moses? Why the *spokesman*, the *Logos*, of course!

Notice I Cor. 10:4, ". . . And did all drink the same spiritual drink, for they [the ancient Israelites] drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, *and that Rock was Christ!*"

That certainly clinches it! The One who actually GAVE the laws to the children of Israel from Mount Sinai was the One who later became Jesus Christ! JESUS CHRIST WAS THE LORD OF THE OLD TESTAMENT—THE GOD WHO DEALT PERSONALLY WITH ISRAEL, WHO INSPIRED THE PROPHETS, WHO REVEALED HIMSELF TO THE PHARAOH, TO NEBUCHADNEZZAR AND THE KINGS OF THE EARTH!

Most people have assumed the God of the Old Testament was the Father of Jesus Christ. This is proven by God's own inspired word to be a great error. As we read in I Cor. 10:4, the "ROCK" of the Old Testament was Jesus Christ. Remember the word "LORD" is actually YHVH, which means the Ever-living One, or the Life Self-Existent One. Now see II Sam. 22:2-3, "He said, 'The LORD [YHVH] is my *rock*, and my fortress, and my deliverer, my God, my *rock*, in whom I take refuge; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge, my saviour; thou savest me from violence.'"

In Ps. 18:1-2, *this same ROCK is YAHVEH*. When Moses was talking to YAHVEH, and asked Him His name (Ex. 3:4-5, 13), He answered that His name was "I AM" (verses 6, 14) and "YAHVEH"—the Eternal One (verse 15). See also Ex. 6:2-3. In John 18:5-8, as soon as Christ made Himself known

to the crowd led by Judas as "I AM" (the "he" in italics is added without inspiration, and was not in the original), they went backward and fell to the ground. Again in John 8:56-58, Jesus called Himself: "I AM."

The person of the Godhead who is our REDEEMER is Jesus Christ. John 4:42 contains this: "They said to the woman, 'It is no longer because of your words that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that *this is indeed the SAVIOUR of the world!*'" See Isa. 60:16, where YAHVEH is called the *Redeemer*, which is the SAVIOUR, or the Holy One of Israel!

Jesus, the Saviour, was the Holy One born of Israel [Jacob]. Jesus is the LORD of the Old Testament.

What to DO About It

What an overwhelming truth it is, to realize the glorious, the awe-inspiring magnitude of Jesus' pre-human existence! It should make you realize more fully the tremendous PRICE that was paid that YOU might have your guilty past blotted out, and the slate wiped clean! GOD HIMSELF, in the person of Jesus Christ, paid that penalty!

Think of it!

God the Father sent His own Son down to this mundane sphere of sin and fleshly emotions to suffer for humanity, and thereby provide a way of salvation, a way to enter into life eternal! The Life that was poured out on the cross was a human life—but it was much more than that—it was also Very GOD-LIFE! Jesus was Human, but He was also Divine! Day and night, while on this earth, Christ must have remembered the tremendous power and glory *from all eternity* He had enjoyed with the Father—and realized it would have been possible to *sin*, to *relent* in His battle against human nature, and *become eternally lost!* The very will-power, the determination and perseverance of Jesus Christ, together with the Divine presence of the Holy Spirit of God, kept Him from falling, that He could become the Saviour of the world!

Can you grasp it? Can you comprehend? Your very Creator—the One who gives you every breath of air you breathe, DIED FOR YOU! What are *you* going to DO about it?

IF YOU DIE... Will You Live Again?

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a WEEKLY SABBATH whereas it was actually an ANNUAL SABBATH—which happened to fall on *Thursday* in A.D. 31, the year of the crucifixion.

After this came their WEEKLY SABBATH on Saturday. Between these days the women bought and prepared spices (Mark 16:1).

God has seen to it that these two WORLD IMPORTANT EVENTS—the Crucifixion and the Resurrection—have been well witnessed! Christ's healing and miracles had attracted a large following. People were interested in him wherever he went. On the day of His crucifixion a large multitude was present. (Matt. 27:24).

Mary (Jesus' mother) and the other two Marys and John were present also (John 19:25,26).

As Christ said he would rise the third day the chief priests and Pharisees took great precautions to see that his body did not disappear by being stolen by the disciples, so a guard was set and a great stone was rolled over the sepulture entrance. (Matt. 27:63-66).

Christ's body did disappear though! Christ was resurrected as a divine spirit Being! He had been RESURRECTED from the dead THE THIRD DAY and Mary Magdalene (John 20:14), the disciples (John 20:19), and after that about 500 people *saw him at one time!* (I Cor. 15:6). Fifty days later in Jerusalem a large number gathered from all over the world to observe Pentecost and await the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:2).

From this point, the news "of the resurrection was spread by the apostles" (Acts 4:2), and their converts. Gibbon, in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, says that *the resurrection is one of the best authenticated facts in all history*. Also, Gibbon says ". . . it is no wonder that so advantageous an offer (resurrection and eternal life), should have been accepted by great numbers of every religion . . ."

THE WORLD WAS CONVINCED OF THIS RESURRECTION TO A DIFFERENT TYPE