

Who—What—was Jesus *before His Human Birth?*

*This question has puzzled theologians for centuries: Was He God—
Was He Angel—Was He Spiritual Essence—Did He Exist Only in
the Plan, Thought, and Purpose of God?*

by Ted Armstrong and David Jon Hill

DID CHRIST exist prior to his Human birth through the virgin Mary? Was he God? Was he actually born in HUMAN flesh? Or . . . was he born of a divine mother, immaculately conceived? What does the Bible teach on this vital subject?

We cannot know the answers to these questions until we first realize just what—or who—is God. Is God a Person . . . an Essence . . . or only a Principle or an Idea?

The word "God" is grossly misunderstood. Men have always liked to "create God in their own image" by putting their own interpretation on the meaning of the word "God." Here—from the Bible—is the real meaning of this word.

In Genesis 1:1 the original Hebrew word translated "God" is "Elohim," the plural form of the Hebrew word "El" or "Eloah" meaning mighty one. This word is plural—it means MORE THAN ONE. However, it is not a plural like boys or girls but rather a uni-plural word like church or family. There is one God, but composed of MORE THAN ONE MEMBER.

Scripture Reveals God NOT One Person

First, let's read Genesis 1:26 which says . . . what? Read it!

"And God said, Let US make man in OUR image, after OUR likeness . . ."

Do you think God was talking to Himself? Notice what God continues to say, "And the Lord God said, Behold the man is become as one of us to know good and evil . . ." Notice it—God said ". . . the man is become as ONE of US . . ." God could not have said ONE of US if there were only one person composing God.

Now, for the final clincher, let's turn over to 1 Samuel 4:8. The Philistines had heard a great cry which went up from the camp of the Hebrews when the ark of God had entered the camp . . . and they were afraid—so read on. "Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? These are the Gods that smote the

Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness." That certainly finishes it—THESE ARE THE GODS! Meaning plural—not one person, but more than one, forming and composing God who is a KINGDOM.

Is God a Trinity?

If the family of God has more than one member does the Bible reveal just how many persons are in this family? Is it a trinity composed of three members—Father, Son and Holy Ghost?

To begin with, the word "Ghost" should be translated "Spirit." When the King James version of the Bible was translated in 1611, people firmly believed in ghosts. Due to this fact, the words which should have been translated "Holy Spirit" were translated "Holy Ghost," thus giving this most sacred word a wrong connotation.

Christ himself, in unmistakable words, reveals just how many persons there are in the family of God. "No man (or person) knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." (Matt. 11:27.) How many persons mentioned? Only two, the Father and the Son. If there were another member of the Godhead, he would certainly know both the Father and the Son, would he not?

Now consider—is Christ the Son of God? As he is the Son of the Person he called the Father, and if the Holy Spirit is a separate person, he couldn't be the son of the Holy Spirit could he? And yet your Bible plainly says that before Joseph and Mary came together ". . . she was found with child of the Holy Ghost." There it is! If the Holy Spirit were a separate person in the family of God, then Jesus is the son of THAT person and NOT of the Father!

The truth is that the Holy Spirit is *not* one of the Persons of the Godhead, but is the substance of which those who are in the Godhead are composed. "God is a Spirit . . ." (John 4:24.) There is only *one* Spirit which composes God

but God is a family of *more than one person*. Just as we humans are composed of flesh and blood (material substances) so the family of God is composed of Spirit . . . the Holy Spirit. Just as we use the power of material muscle to carry out our human plans so the family of God (Elohim) uses the power of the Holy Spirit to carry out the divine plan.

If Jesus is now part of the family of God, when did he achieve that status?

How Jesus Became a Son of God

Let's examine the statement made in John 1:1. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." In the original Greek the "Word" is "Logos" which means one who speaks—a spokesman—one who personifies the very words of God.

According to John 1:3, it was the "Word" which made all things. Therefore he had to exist before anything else (Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:10-19). God created all things by Christ, who employed the power of the Holy Spirit. The Father gave the order to Christ who spoke the words which were executed by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Again—we read in Malachi 3:1. "Behold, I will send my messenger . . . even the messenger of the covenant." A messenger is one who brings a message—a spokesman—a "Logos."

When this promised Messenger came he was called Jesus. That was his human name just as John or George or James might be your name. However while your parents might have named you anything that sounded good, there was a reason for the name Jesus. The angel told Joseph that he should call his name Jesus because he should save his people from their sins (Matt. 1:21).

God always names people what they are. When the Devil was a shining archangel his name was Lucifer which means "Light-bringer" or "Shining star of the dawn." When he rebelled, his name was changed to fit his new character so.

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Who Was Jesus?

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he was called "Satan" which means "an adversary." In the same way the Savior was called "Jesus" because that name shows what he is. The name Jesus means "YHWH (THE ETERNAL) saves" or "YHWH (THE ETERNAL) is the Savior."

Jesus Himself said that he existed before Abraham (John 8:58). And according to the first chapter of John, he had existed from the beginning of creation. Did he then exist before this "beginning"?

To determine the answer, let us examine a little-understood passage in the Bible. The sixth chapter of Hebrews states that Christ has been ordained a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. Who was this mysterious figure, mentioned only twice in the Bible?

Was he man . . . angel . . . or what? Melchisedec "first being by interpretation *King of righteousness*, and . . . also *King of Peace*." He was not human but Divine—one of the GOD Family! Hebrews 7:1 reads as follows: "For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God" . . . Notice . . . he was *priest* of the most high God. "Without father, without mother, without descent, *having neither beginning of days nor end of life* but made like unto the Son of God; ABIDETH A PRIEST CONTINUALLY."

Notice carefully. He was not the FATHER of the God Family—He was the *Priest* or Representative of the Father. He was like the SON—He was Christ the Eternal *before* He became human flesh by birth as the Christ child. Melchisedec "*abideth a Priest continually*"—He was, at the time Hebrews was written, "*abiding*"—*remaining continually* High Priest. At that time Jesus Christ was the High Priest. There is but ONE High Priest. Therefore Melchisedec was the "Logos"—the "YHWH"—who was by human birth *made* flesh—He and Christ are one and the same Person. And He existed as much *from* eternity as He shall *for* eternity—"having neither beginning of days nor end of life." He *always* existed, the same as the Father!

The final clincher to this whole discussion is Micah 5:2. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah . . . out of thee shall come unto me he that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, *from EVERLASTING*." Jesus existed *from all eternity* before being born into human flesh. He is one of the persons in the *eternal* family of God. He was not a created being of the Father.

Since Jesus is divine, then was he ever born into HUMAN flesh at all? Was Mary

a divine person, immaculately conceived, according to the doctrine of the "immaculate conception"?

Immaculate Conception a Fable

This doctrine teaches that Mary's parents were so perfect that God changed them into a holy, sinless divine flesh. It was while they were in this state that Mary was conceived. If this were true, then Mary was not composed of mortal flesh as we are.

In II John 7, we find what God, through His apostle, labels this idea: "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come *in the flesh*. This is a deceiver and an antichrist." It is a doctrine of antichrist!

Before Jesus was born in Bethlehem, he was a member of the eternal Godhead. When he was born he was a HUMAN being who could be tempted, suffer, bleed and die (Hebrews 2:14). After his resurrection he was again an immortal member of the family of God.

Yes—it's all very easy to understand. A lot of Bible quotations and lengthy references are not necessary in order to get a clear picture of the overall meaning of Bible Scripture. Rather a summing up of the important points on any one subject, adding the TOTAL together, accepting each verse for what it says, and not attempting to *make* one fit the other—that is the proper way to arrive at the answer.

Capital Punishment?

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Hebrews 10:26-31 teaches us clearly and unmistakably that a *far worse* punishment will befall those who willfully trample on God's law than that which was visited on the fleshly Israelites. That punishment is *eternal, everlasting* DEATH.

The "ministration of death" in Israel was only a lesser, physical *type* of the eternal punishment—(eternal DEATH)—for refusing to obey God's law—once the knowledge has come.

Now we can see plainly revealed how Christ, as the World-Ruler, will stamp out crime and lawlessness in all nations. God says "I change not." Christ is the *same* yesterday, today, and forever. He was the God of Israel who enforced CAPITAL PUNISHMENT in national, fleshly Israel. The nations of this world will become the kingdoms of Christ. They will still be human, carnal, ruled over by Christ and the saints then made immortal divine members of the Kingdom, or Family of God. There will be strict *law-enforcement!* It will be *swift* and *certain!* Judgments will be rendered

by Divine Ones, able to read human minds and hearts. There will be *no escape* for the guilty. There will be *no miscarriage* of justice. Men will have such FEAR to do wrong that crime will disappear! No one will fear thieves, murderers, gangsters. There will be PEACE and SAFETY—and the *only* fear will be the fear to *break the law!* Humanity will come to realize the enormity of sin, and will live the way of God's Laws of Love.

But we, whom God *now* calls to salvation, are to *teach* God's laws then, and enforce them. Our life now is the training ground to educate and prepare us for that grave responsibility and wonderful opportunity.

Let us learn the lesson from these examples that God intended, and quit trying to use *human reason* to justify our wrong deeds. Then we will reap the blessing of keeping God's laws, and live the abundant lives that He intended (John 10:10).

"Be *not* deceived; GOD IS NOT MOCKED: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap (Gal. 6:7).

DO YOU believe God's word?

Many of you have been trying to hide your eyes from God's law. You spend much time and effort in a vain attempt to excuse or justify breaking one of the commandments (Mat. 5:17-20).

Remember, (Mat. 5:17-20) that even the least commandment is still *very much in force!*

Have you been "postponing" obedience to God? Why?

Do you think that reason will stand up in the judgment?

God's word says that your reward for sin is DEATH (Rom. 6:23). Yes, *in this case* the Bible teaches CAPITAL PUNISHMENT. Remember that this time *God himself* will carry out that punishment if you don't repent!

If you haven't done so already, you'd better take Peter's advice to "*Repent, and be baptized* every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the *gift* of the *Holy Spirit*" (Acts 2:38).

You will have to REPENT of breaking God's law. You will need to *be baptized* as an outward symbol of your willingness to bury your old, disobedient self. *Then* God will *give* you the Holy Spirit, through which you will receive the *love* to keep His law.

God loves you. He wants to *give* you *eternal life!*

But, in His wisdom, God has decreed that you must *first* learn to live the right, the sensible, and the happy kind of life. God's eternal, spiritual law—the Ten Commandments—is the basis of that sensible way of life.