

## The Pre-existence of Christ

The Prince and the Pauper: The story of a prince and a pauper who looked alike and met each other. They decided to change places to see what it is like to live like the other. However when the prince wanted to return to his castle dressed like the pauper they guards wouldn't let him in. They gave him a hard time. He had to then convince everyone that he truly was the prince dressed as a pauper and that he always was a prince before he became a pauper. So it is with Christ. He always was God yet dressed as a pauper and has to convince the world that he truly is God. He was God before he became man. Even then, as the prince never ceased to be the prince even after dressing as a pauper, so Christ never ceased to be God when he became man.

As Christmas approaches we need to understand that Christmas isn't the beginning of Christ's existence. It is merely the time when he became a human being. He has always been in existence – always lived, always worked, always been present, always been an ever present help in times of trouble.

John 8: 48 – 59 Emphasis on verse 58 "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"

### 1) Honour due to the Father

- Before we look at the pre-existence of Christ we need to put into perspective that Jesus honoured the Father
  - "I honour my Father and you dishonour me" (v. 49)
  - Jesus expects us to honour him as much as he honours the Father.
  - He is equating himself to the Father and if we do not honour Jesus then neither do we honour the Father. If we do not glorify Jesus then neither do we glorify the Father
- Jesus speaks about his oneness with the Father
  - John 10: 30 "I and the Father are one."
  - John 17: 11 "...so that they may be one as we are one"
- His oneness with the Father isn't merely in purpose but in essence
  - Strong puts it this way: "As the effulgence of the sun manifests the sun's nature, which other would be unrevealed, yet is inseparable from the sun and ever one with it, so Christ reveals God, but is eternally one with God."
- God brought the world into existence by His word – He brought about life in the world by his word
  - "If anyone keeps my word he will never see death" (v.51)
  - We cannot keep Jesus' word apart from Him – He is the Logos – the eternal word of God that brought about life in the world.
  - The keeping of Jesus' word cannot be done in isolation from Him. It is something that is done in relationship with Him.
  - John 17: 1 – 5 "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began."

## 2) The pre-existence of Christ

- We have seen that Jesus had the glory of God in God's presence before the world began
- Here Jesus said to the Jews: "before Abraham was born, I am!"
  - He did not say "I was" but "I am"
  - Jesus used the very expression that God used to reveal himself to the Israelites when he sent Moses to Egypt to set them free
  - EX 3:13 Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?"<sup>14</sup> God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.' "
  - The Jews had no doubt that Jesus' words were a claim to deity as they picked up stones to stone him.
- Christ the Creator and sustainer of the universe
  - Hebrews 1: 2 - 3 "... but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word"
  - Hebrews 1: 10 "He also says, "In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands."
  - Colossians 1: 15 – 17 "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together."
- Christ accompanied the Israelites in the wilderness
  - 1 Corinthians 10: 2 – 4 "They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ."
- Christ was the Messiah who was God himself to be born a Son
  - Isaiah 9: 6 "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

## 3) The effect of Christ's pre-existence on our lives

- If Jesus be the pre-existent God – by pre-existent we mean that He existed prior to His coming to earth – then we ought to worship him and submit our lives to Him as God.
- The prophets died but Jesus is eternal. If we hold onto the words of the prophets we too will die but if we walk in faith in Jesus then we will be sure of eternal life.
- If we're trying to get out of a pit and three men jump into the pit to save us with ropes and grappling hooks on the ends. They then all throw their ropes up to the top. Two of the ropes are too short and hook only half way up. The third is long enough to reach the top and hooks securely on something outside the pit. Which rope will you climb up? Obviously the one that will get you out the pit.
- The prophets all pointed to Jesus but only He can get you out of your pit and give eternal life.
- He knew what eternity is all about before He became a man. Him becoming a man is a mere moment in eternity