

## **Genesis zero: The Preexistence of Jesus Christ**

It has been my pleasure at Grace Fellowship over the last several months to read the Call to Worship during our church services. As we have been going through the book of Matthew, he has used several Prophecies to claim Jesus is the Messiah, that he is the Anointed one that God has brought to the world, that the world may be saved through Him, reconciling God's lost children to Him, to bring Him glory. When studying our Call to Worship I have been blessed to have my eyes opened to God's plan of redemption, salvation and glory throughout the Old Testament. Although I am still in study of this and will be for the rest of my life, I have been blessed again with the support and resources to be able to share my study of the Messiah in the Old Testament. I pray that this will be a blessing to you as it is to me, that your faith will be strengthened as you see God's plan unfold, and that you see God's mercy and love and faithfulness throughout scripture.

We as Christians believe that Jesus is the Messiah, or the Christ - these are the same title, Messiah being Hebrew, Christ being Greek. But before we start looking at God's promises of the Messiah, I want to establish that Jesus Christ is part of the eternal Trinity. He was there before Creation, He was there during Creation, and He came from heaven in which He had glory and left it in the ultimate act of humility. Why does this matter on account of learning about the Messiah? I think very simply to protect ourselves from false doctrine. My wife just brought to my attention last night the Jehovah Witness religion, and at first I thought that any belief based on Jesus Christ couldn't be too bad. From what I understand now, after researching them a little is the fact that they don't believe in Jesus's deity - that Jesus is not the Son of God, but an archangel. This is not what scripture teaches at all, and what a terrible way to take away from God's glory and His demonstration of love. Jesus being God is one of the most fundamental things we learn as Christians, and one of the first things you hear is John 3:16 "He gave his only Son".

Here is what the Lord Jesus says of Himself.

John 17:5 - "Now, Father, glorify me in your presence with that glory I had with you before the world existed."

So we can see that Christ was with the Father before the world existed and that He had glory. I take this glory to mean splendor, or elegance, or magnificence. I believe that just by being in heaven, God's glory (His very essence of nature) washes over all who are there and everything in it.

Jesus descended from heaven:

John 6:33 "For the bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." Vs 35 tells us that Jesus is this bread. Jesus descended from heaven to give life.

John 6:38 "For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of Him who sent me."

John 6:62 “Then what if you were to observe the Son of Man ascending to where He was before?”

John 8:23 “You are from below,” He told them. “I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.”

John 16:28 “I came from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I am leaving the world and going to the Father.” Jesus descended...and will ascend after his work is complete

I think it would be fair to say that John wanted us to plainly see Jesus’s deity and is going to great lengths to instill this fact in our minds. Scripture not only tells us that He was in heaven and divine before the world, but that He created the world. If you go to Genesis 1:1 you will read something like “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” The Hebrew word here for God is “Elohim”, it is plural, meaning more than single, or multi-parted. I’m not going to get too in depth on the trinity, because it is a very difficult concept, but I want us to see that the teaching of the trinity was in the very beginning. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit created the world. This shouldn’t come as too big of a surprise considering the next verse introduces the Holy Spirit. Gen 1:2 “the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.”

The New Testament gives us Christ as Creator as well.

John 1:1-3 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. All things were created through Him, and apart from Him not one thing was created that has been created. (underline added)

Colossians 1:15-17 He (Jesus) is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For everything was created by Him, in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities - all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and by Him all things hold together. (underline and parentheses added)

Hebrews 1:2-3 In these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son. God has appointed Him heir of all things and made the universe through Him. The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact expression of His nature, sustaining all things by His powerful word.

God the Son is part of the God that was before all things, created all things and sustains all things. And He became flesh nearly 2,000 years ago to become our Redeemer, our Messiah, our Anointed One that would bring a new covenant with His blood, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins (Matt 26:28). Why did God Himself come to save us? Why is it so important that we see Jesus as the Son? First of all, God in Himself is infinitely valuable, so His death on the cross was the only sufficient sacrifice to be made for sin. But what I really hope you can take with you and hold in your heart is the nature of God He reveals in doing this, the humility He displays to save His people. It’s what He shows us of Himself in coming to earth and being our sacrifice for salvation, that kind of love and faithfulness is something we need to see. We need to understand that Jesus is God to be able to perceive what kind of God we have. We

have a radical God, a God that stopped at no lengths to show His love, faithfulness and dedication to His people. When you study the life of Jesus like we have over the last years in Matthew, you can't help but notice that Jesus is not a tame people pleaser. He is radical! I don't mean insane radical, I mean devoted, loving, compassionate...the kind that makes you want to throw your own desires aside to help the people around you. When I stop and think about how radical God is about His faithfulness, it makes me want to be radical, to be disciplined, to live a Christ centered life, to share my faith, to love others, to exalt God, to live for His glory, to not put myself before others, to live a holy life...the list goes on. So many good things come from focusing on what we have in recognizing our God's love for us. His love that sacrificing Himself was not out of the question to reconcile us.

I want to answer one more question before the end. Why does it take away God's glory to not see Jesus as God? I mean God is still all powerful and Lord of heaven and earth so what does it hurt...

When we don't see Jesus as God, we reject what God has shown us about Himself, and we lose the splendor and majesty of what Jesus did, and take from Him His deserved glory. I'm talking about His humility described in Philipians 2:6-11:

[Adopt the same attitude as that of Christ Jesus, who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be exploited. Instead He emptied Himself by assuming the form of a servant, taking on the likeness of humanity. And when He had come as a man, He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point to death on a cross. For this reason God highly exalted Him and gave Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow - in heaven and on earth and under the earth - and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.]

See, by removing His deity, we remove His humility and it completely destroys wonderful scripture like this. Christ was existing in the form of God-the all powerful creator, He emptied Himself of this and became a servant, becoming human and humbled Himself to die on a cross. Because He did these things He is exalted, and every tongue will say that He is Lord, and it brings glory to God! Seriously, who wouldn't want this God to be their God? If someone rejects God, they are not seeing who he truly is, no one can turn from this kind of love after their eyes have been opened to it. Pray for those who haven't seen, who are still walking around blind because of Satan's deceptions. Pray that they would see God's love. I believe it is only when we truly see His love, and how deep it goes, it is only then that we are willing to cast ourselves aside and put God and others first. Fear of not going to hell will only take a person so far, fear does not change a person's will to live a godly life, or to love others as themselves. Perhaps for a little while it will drive them, but it is not lasting, God did not intend for us to have faith through fear, but through His love. Perfect love drives out fear (1John 4:18), so that when we believe the love God has for us, we no longer have fear, no fear of punishment, no fear of hell, because we are in God and know that we are in His love. The joy of God's love makes us want to be like Him, to become like His Son, the visible image of the invisible God. I am saying these things to dare you to see God's love, accept it, and let His love fill you with peace and joy, rejoice in this love, rejoice in God, because it will bring God glory...and yes it will make you feel good. It will

feel good to follow His commands, to love others, to give rather than to receive, to live in His word and apply it to your life, it feels good to be free from sin! Christ didn't break the shackles of our slavery in sin for us to not enjoy Him, or to not be joyful.

### **Conclusion**

Jesus was in the beginning, He created all things and sustains all things. He was there when Satan fell from heaven (Luke 10:18), He was there when Adam and Eve took the forbidden fruit, He was there before Abraham (John 8:58), and He was there when the Old Testament was written. So we are going to unfold Christ in the Old Testament, how God reveals His plan through prophecy and how we can identify the Messiah through the Old Testament. God gave us clues on what the Messiah would look like and what He would accomplish, and through these we can correctly identify and strengthen our faith, that it all points to and is fulfilled in Jesus Christ our Lord.