

## Christology

### The pre-existent, eternal nature of Christ

### Study #2

Our topic is two-fold. We are studying His pre-existence and His eternity. The two go hand-in-hand though, and that is why we are going to study both at the same time.

#### **Question #1** - Did Jesus exist before the incarnation?

Did Jesus exist before He took on Human flesh? Did Jesus exist before He became a man? Did Jesus exist before He was born on earth?

**John 1:1-2, 14** - Jesus was in the beginning with God. Then He became a man. In the beginning of the creation of the heavens and the earth, Jesus was with God. That fact is stressed twice.

**John 8:58** - Jesus existed before Abraham was born. That is a huge claim from the lips of Jesus Himself. Abraham was born about 2,000 years before Jesus said these words. Jesus claimed to be the "I AM" before Abraham ever lived. That phrase "I AM" that Jesus used was significant. No one else dared use that phrase. That phrase comes from Exodus 3:13-14.

**John 17:5, 24** - Jesus was glorified with the Father before the world began. Jesus also knew about and remembered the love that God the Father had for Him before the world began.

**Colossians 1:13-17** - Jesus is before all things because through Him, the heavens and the earth were created, and all rank and authority was established. Everything was created through Jesus and for Jesus. Very clearly we learn that Jesus was in existence before heaven and earth.

**Hebrews 1:2** - Through Jesus, the world was created.

**Micah 5:2** - Jesus is from ancient days, or from everlasting (KJV). The Old Testament claimed that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem, but His origin would not be from Bethlehem.

**Isaiah 9:6** - Jesus' character is that of the everlasting Father. Isaiah spoke about Jesus. Isaiah specifically said that his name would be called the "Mighty God, Everlasting Father." In the Hebrew culture, a person's name meant much more than a person's name means to us. The name for a person signified and defined the character of that person. For Jesus to be called the Everlasting Father, Isaiah is saying that Jesus possesses the characteristics of the Everlasting Father. If we were to ask Isaiah how to describe the Messiah's character, he would say "The Messiah's character is the identical character of the Everlasting Father. The one to come is identical with God." Notice also, that Isaiah did not write that a Son would be born. He wrote that a child would be born, but this child would be the Son who was given. That means this Son was existing before he became a child. He was given, not created. Jesus' name is called by the Old Testament the "Everlasting Father."

**Yes. The Bible clearly teaches that the Lord Jesus Christ existed before His incarnation.**

**Question #2** - How long did Jesus exist before the incarnation?

Is Jesus eternal? Or has He been produced by God? The implications of this question are incredibly significant. If Jesus was made by God, if He is the product of God, that means He has not existed for all eternity. If He is not eternal, then He is a blasphemous individual who was wrong about Himself, and we should not put our hope in Him. In fact, we should reject Him completely. That is how significant this issue is. Let me explain myself. I want to give one example to explain why I am making such a big deal about this. Later, when we discuss Jesus' deity, I will have more examples, but for now, let me give you one. For this example, I'll have to show you three verses.

**Isaiah 42:8** - God makes Himself very clear through the prophet Isaiah - no one else is to be worshiped. God alone has glory. He will not give His glory to another. God will not share His glory. God alone deserves worship. God will not tolerate praise to anything other than Himself.

**Romans 1:24-25** - God's wrath is poured out of people who worship the creation rather than the Creator. Worship belongs solely to God. If a person worships something God has created, instead of worshiping Him, the Creator, that person deserves God's wrath. There were men who worshipped Jesus and Jesus did not rebuke them.

**Luke 24:51-52** - The disciples who saw Jesus ascend into heaven worshiped Him. This is not the only example either. The wise men who visited Jesus in Bethlehem worshipped Him. Jesus, after healing a blind man, was worshipped by that man. Jesus did not rebuke the man. He accepted the worship.

If Jesus is a product of God, if He has been produced by God, then that means He has been created by God. If Jesus has been created by God that not only means that He is not eternal, but it also means that He falls under the category of creation, not Creator. If He is creation, then God won't tolerate worship of Jesus. If Jesus is a created being, He is not to be worshiped. If Jesus accepted worship even though He is not worthy of worship, He is a deceiver. He must be rejected. This issue of whether or not Jesus is eternal is a very big deal.

**John 1:3** - John declared that all things came into being through Jesus. Apart from Jesus nothing has come into being that has come into being. That means that the Bible claims Jesus to be separate from creation. This declares Jesus to be the agent of creation. John wrote all things came into being through Him. The Bible teaches that Jesus is not the creation, but rather, the Creator.

**Hebrews 1:2** - Again, the Bible declares that Jesus is separate from creation. Jesus' nature is not that He is created by God, but that He is the Creator with God.

**Colossians 1:16** - Not only on earth, but also in heaven, Jesus is set apart from creation. He is not like the angels that have been created by God. Through Jesus, the angels were created by Him and for Him. The Bible teaches that Jesus is not a product of God like the rest of creation. He is the Creator rather than the creation. All these verses leads us to the conclusion that Jesus was not produced by God. He has not been created. That will lead us to our understanding of His eternal nature.

**John 1:1-2** - The reason we are now back in John 1:1 is because we have not discussed the tense of the word “was” in verse 1-2. You’ll notice the word “was” four times in verses 1 and 2. Each time John uses this word, he writes in the imperfect past tense. That is significant in Greek. What that means is that there is no timeline ascribed to that word “was.” John is saying that Jesus, the Word, has been eternally existing, He has been eternally in fellowship with God, and He has been eternally God. In the beginning He already was, He had always been with God, and He had always been God. Very clearly we have the Bible teaching us that Jesus has always been in existence.

Now we know that the Bible claims God to be eternal (**Gen. 21:33; Psalm 90:2**). That is openly stated over and over throughout Scripture. The debate for most is whether or not Jesus is eternal. If Jesus was with God in the beginning, and if He has always been in fellowship with God, He must be eternal as well. This is also a major issue for Jesus’ deity. John 1:1 plainly calls Jesus God. Jesus can’t be God if He is not eternal and He can’t be eternal if He is not God. The doctrine of Jesus, His pre-existence, His eternality, and His deity are all interconnected and cannot be separated. If one falls apart, all fall apart. We will certainly discuss what the Bible has to say on the deity of Jesus in the coming weeks, but for now, I want us to close with one more verse of the Bible that explains the eternal nature of Jesus.

**John 8:58** - Jesus did not say that He not say “Before Abraham was, I was too,” or “before Abraham was, I was already.” He said “Before Abraham was I am.” He could not explain it in any other way than to say He existed in the present tense. Jesus never claimed to have been in existence since a certain point in time, He claimed to presently have always been in existence, just like how God described His self existent nature to Moses in Exodus 3:14.

**Jesus has existed from all eternity. He had no beginning. He is eternal.** In the coming weeks, as we look at Jesus deity and His activity as Creator, the evidence for His eternality will become more and more concrete. For now, these verse are just the beginning of us gaining our understanding of who Jesus is. Each verse listed regarding Jesus’ pre-existence is also a verse that speaks to His eternality. For more references to study, please look at **John 17:5, 24; Hebrews 7:3; Revelation 1:8, 17; 21:6; 22:13.**

