

Our subject of the night is on the pre-incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ. Before we study Jesus' incarnation (taking on flesh), we should study His pre-incarnate work. We have spent 10 weeks studying the deity of Christ, but tonight we begin a transition into the humanity of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ is fully God, and yet, He is fully man. He is the God-man. He is one person with two natures - deity and humanity.

Our question tonight is this:

If Jesus existed as God before He became a man, what was He doing?

That is a good and logical question, and the good news for us is that the Bible does give us an answer.

This topic has much to do with Jesus' eternal nature and His pre-existence. If Jesus pre-existed His birth, and pre-existed creation, and if He is eternal, He was probably actively doing something during that time.

Jesus' work as the Pre-incarnate Christ is shown in the Bible in primarily three activities.

Activity #1 - Jesus was active as Creator.

Jesus was involved in the creation of all things.

Colossians 1:16; John 1:3; Hebrews 1:2; Genesis 1- "and God said"

How much has Jesus Created? Everything - in heaven and on earth, Everything - material and spiritual.

Why were all things created? All things were created for Jesus. He created all things so that He could achieve His purpose for that which is created. That means all of creation has been made to serve His purposes.

Activity #2 - Jesus is active as the sustainer of creation.

Jesus has been and continues to sustain the heavens and the earth.

Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3

Colossians 1:17 *And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*

The Lord Jesus Christ is the reason the world continues to function. He sustains everything He has created.

Activity #3 - The Lord Jesus Christ was active in the Old Testament as The Angel of the LORD.

In the Old Testament, we read about The Angel of the LORD. This Angel is very unique. An angel is a messenger of the Lord. He speaks on behalf of God and ministers to the saints (Hebrews 1:14), but the reason *The* Angel of the LORD is unique is because He speaks as God, and He is distinguished from *an* angel of the Lord.

(The Angel is different from an angel)

Let me show you an example of how the Bible distinguishes the names of *The* Angel and *an* angel.

Luke 1:11 *And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.*

In Luke 1:11, the angel Gabriel appears to Zechariah. He is referred to as an angel of the Lord. Notice also, how this Gabriel referees to Himself as being a messenger for God in verse 19.

Luke 1:19 *And the angel answered him, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news.*

Now let's look at an appearing of The Angel of the Lord.

Genesis 16:7 *The angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur.*

In Genesis 16 we find The Angel of the LORD appearing to Hagar. Now I want you to notice the difference in how He presents His message.

Genesis 16:10 *The angel of the LORD also said to her, "I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude."*

There is a big difference between the way that Gabriel, an angel of the Lord talks, as compared with how The Angel of the LORD talks. The Angel of the LORD does not speak on behalf of God, but rather, He speaks as God. He said, "I will surely multiply your offspring." That is far different than saying, "God will surely multiply your offspring."

The Bible makes it clear that there is something distinguished and unique about this Angel of the LORD. But what is so different about Him?

(The Angel of the LORD is a self-manifestation of Yahweh - God Himself)

This Angel speaks as God.

Genesis 22:15-17; 31:11-13; Exodus 3:2, 6

This Angel identifies Himself with God.

Genesis 21:17-18; Judges 6:11-22

This Angel claims to do what only God can do.

Judges 2:1-4; Genesis 16:10

Those who saw this Angel understood that they had seen God.

Judges 13:3-22; Genesis 32:24-30

There is a distinction between Him and God, just like there is a distinction between Jesus and God the Father while there is unity in the fact Jesus is God and the Father is God.

Genesis 24:7; Zechariah 1:12-13

This Angel does not appear in Scripture after the birth of Jesus.

This Angel acted as a messenger.

Genesis 16:7-14; 22:11-18; 31:11-13

This Angel guided and protected Israel.

Exodus 14:19; 23:20; 2 Kings 19:35

This Angel is the instrument of judgment on Israel.

1 Chronicles 21:1-27; 2 Samuel 24:16

This Angel is the agent of refreshment to Elijah.

1 Kings 19:5-7

Who is this Angel?

This angel is none other than Jesus Himself. This is a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus in human form.

Why do we say it's Jesus?

God the Father has never been seen because He is an invisible Spirit.

1 Timothy 1:17; Romans 1:20; 1 John 4:12; John 4:24

The Lord Jesus Christ is the only member of the trinity that has taken on human form.

John 1:14; Romans 8:3-4; Philippians 2:5-8

The Lord Jesus Christ is God's declaration of Himself to mankind.

Colossians 1:15; John 1:18

The Angel of the Lord who accompanied Israel was Jesus, the Rock that followed them.

Exodus 14:19; 23:20; 1 Corinthians 10:4

The Old Testament appearances of Jesus as the Angel of the LORD are previews of the day He would come into earth and live life as a full man. An Old Testament appearance of Jesus in physical form is called a Theophany.

Now those three activities - creator, sustainer, and angel of the LORD - are the three clear activities of Jesus during His pre-incarnate state.

"No other historical activities of Christ are revealed as happening in His pre-incarnate state. His work as Messiah required the Incarnation, though it was predicted in the Old Testament. Likewise His work as Savior necessitated the incarnation. The Old Testament does give specific revelation of the second person as Savior, only God as Savior. To have done so would also have required an Old Testament revelation of the Trinity. Rather that period is called 'the times of ignorance'(Acts 17:30).

Though our Lord was not inactive in His pre-incarnate state, His greatest works necessitates the Incarnation. Nevertheless, He stands magnificent in His person as the eternal God, but, as it were, in the shadows, waiting the spotlight of the Incarnation to reveal His glory and grace (John 1:17; Titus 2:11)" Charles Ryrie, Basic Theology, P. 276.

We started our evening with the question: ***If Jesus existed as God before He became a man, what was He doing?***

We looked into the Bible to discover that **Jesus was actively involved as Creator of all things, sustainer of all things, and He was active as The Angel of the LORD.**