

Jesus Is God

Scripture Shows Jesus Christ Was Not Created

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There are some subjects that are fundamental, basic, and absolutely necessary to a true understanding of God's word, and therefore a true faith, and salvation itself. This subject today is one of them. It addresses the question of whether the Bible and Jesus Himself are what or who they say they are, or you might say, was and is, depending upon the time you are looking at it.

This subject is given not only because of its singular importance, but also because we see occurrences of the fulfilling of the proverb "What goes around comes around." This occurs in the spiritual world, because Satan and his fellow demons make periodic attempts to undermine people's faith so they can confuse their hopes for salvation.

If Jesus was not who He and the Word of God personified claims, and as the written word *also* proclaims, then He was nothing but a very intelligent Charlatan who pulled off an astoundingly successful lie. It is so successful that it has been kept going for almost two thousand years, and most importantly, we have no Savior.

He said that He was the God of the Old Testament, and that fact was, and is to this day, duly reported in the Bible. To the best of my knowledge the groundwork for the challenge against this claim began centuries before He was ever born. It surfaced as a direct challenge against Him in the first century as He lived and preached.

It was revived again and again following His resurrection and the preaching of the gospel by apostles in the prominent rise of what is called Gnosticism.

Gnosticism was not a formal organized religion, but rather an assortment of spiritual concepts, mostly Greek and Egyptian in origin. It was more a collection of philosophic thought that anybody was free to apply to what they personally held to be important to them spiritually. These philosophies became part of what would eventually become the Catholic Church, and from that base have continued and spread all the way into the world of our day.

The apostles, though, taught what Jesus said regarding His origin, that He was God in the flesh, born of the virgin Mary in Bethlehem, and that He grew up in Nazareth.

People were converted on the basis of their convictions regarding these and other teachings, and thus were baptized and came into the church. Some of the new converts already had elements of philosophic Gnostic thoughts before coming into the church, and others were exposed to them *after* coming into the church.

One Gnostic thought is that Jesus could not possibly be God, because God is spirit, and spirit is pristinely pure. Flesh, on the other hand, is hopelessly defiled, polluted and impure, and thus the two cannot mix in the same being. This issue puts the entire Bible at risk as the Word of

God.

My purpose in this message is not to prove the Bible *per se*, but to review statements Jesus and others made regarding His origin, and at the same time give you some biblical logic regarding these things. Now why? Because a challenge to the concept that Jesus is the God of the Old Testament has once again risen within and without the church.

You might recall that during the Feast I said that God Himself is the church's greatest problem, and this is one reason why. It is because there is so much confusion about it. Christians are commanded to seek God following the revealing of Himself that begins the conversion process. Seeking God by the convert is necessary because we come into the church from the world with a great variety of misconceptions, half-truths, and some out-right lies regarding Him. These must be corrected if we are ever to be in His image. I want you to have in your possession a list of scriptures in which His, and thus the Bible's statements appear, along with some thoughts regarding these statements so that your faith can be reinforced. Believe me, brethren, this *is not* a minor issue.

I want to begin by reminding us of why we even believe the Bible and in the face of so many who do not believe in at all, or others who say they believe it, but whose acceptance and application of its truth pay little or no effect of how they live their lives.

Do you know that Europe is already cited as living in a post-Christian culture? So strong is this thought that the politicians want absolutely no mention of the Christian church in the constitution. They do not want to give Christianity any credit for the formation of Western thinking. The sad thing for you and me is that America is rapidly sliding in exactly the same direction. You are well aware of that in all of the getting God out of the schools, out of the courts, out of the movies, out of anything that the mention of God is there. It is slowly being chipped away at and will soon be virtually gone. I would say that we are probably moving faster than Europe ever did in this direction.

Right at the beginning of Galatians Paul makes an interesting statement regarding the world of his time.

Galatians 1:4 Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.

There is a commonly held concept that the old days were better. This proverb is only marginally true. It is not absolutely true. Paul called his days "evil." Can you imagine what he might write about today's worldwide evils, where we are hearing things 24/7 about how evil this world is? The Bible's broad statement is that the days, regardless of the time in which one might live his life, are *always* evil.

You might recall that in Genesis 6:5 God reports, "that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination [intent] of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Then the Flood came and wiped things clean. But shortly after the Flood the Bible reports the rise of the evil Nimrod and the Babylonian system that continues to this day. The world is afflicted by its religion, but in reality its strongly anti-God influence persuades mankind

to follow it rather than God; thus the proverb, "What goes around comes around" is true, because the influence of that system ensures that this is so.

But why do we believe and understand what the Bible so plainly states, while others either out-right disbelieve, or are uncertain?

I Corinthians 1:17-18 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. [Notice the difference there. Some think it is foolish; others think, "Wow! This is really wonderful!"]

I Corinthians 1:19-21 For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

Now Paul is a clear example of the statement that he makes here. Before his conversion he persecuted the church because its message was foolishness to him. Despite his having learned at the feet of Gamaliel—a man considered by the Jews of that day to be their greatest spiritual teacher—Paul had to lay aside those former concepts to accept, to believe, and live by the simple truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. His conversion on the Damascus road took care of that, and his mind changed.

The overall emphasis of this series of verses reveals that mankind's rejection does not have its basis in the act of preaching. The foolishness of preaching we would immediately link to the idea that preaching is foolish. No. That is not what Paul meant at all. Rather, it is disbelief of the message the preacher brings. It is the message mankind rejects as foolish.

The ironic twist in this whole scenario is that it is these truths within the message that carry the power of God unto salvation. Is that not what Paul says in Romans 1:17? He does.

Paul had an unusually intelligent mind. So where does that leave the rest of us who have not been as gifted as Paul was?

I Corinthians 1:24-28 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, has God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to

bring to nought things that are.

The overwhelming majority of us are in the category that we just read of there. We are the foolish, the weak. We are not noble in the way that the world would measure nobility. God has a purpose in doing this, because eventually it is going to become very obvious to the wise of this world that it is the foolish who understand the things they rejected—things that they found foolish in the message of the Bible.

Now what made the difference? It certainly was not our intelligence. It was not our nobility. It was not our power. It was not our brains. It was God that made the difference. It was nothing in us innately that made us able to see through the message and to understand it, and to say, "Hey! This is wisdom." This is not an easy task, because one of God's main purposes in doing things in this manner is encapsulated in verses 29 and 30. Its purpose is to eventually humble all of mankind, including us, to fully understand that whatever is achieved by anybody in his relationship with God is because God Himself makes these accomplishments possible. Let us see this further clarified in verses 29 through 31 for the reason God did it this way.

I Corinthians 1:29-31 That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glories, let him glory in the Lord.

Verses 29 through 31 are so important to God's purpose for you and me individually to understand, believe, and make a part of our *modus operandi* spiritually. It is important because it is the pride in our nature that influences each person to reject the simplicity and life-changing power of the message.

It is that pride that continues to be-devil us until we go into the grave, and until that pride is broken and we humble ourselves before God, we will not bend our necks to submit to the true God. Make sure that you understand that. It is to the true God. Mankind will bend their necks to a god, but they will not bend their necks to the true God until humility becomes part of their life—humility before Him. That humility will be shown by what they *do* with their lives.

Let us understand this thoroughly, because this is at the root, the foundation of accepting the fact, believing the fact, and using the fact that Jesus is God, and always *was* God.

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.

What we see from this is that even the very elementary faith that begins the relationship with God is a gift of God. It is God who has the key that overcomes the pride that unlocks and bridges the gap between us and Him and salvation. Let us keep adding to this principle.

Matthew 13:10-12 And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speak you unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them,

Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is *not* given. For whosoever has, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever has not, from him shall be taken away even that he has.

Matthew 13:16-17 But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see these things which you see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which you hear, and have not heard them. [Are you beginning to see that we are personally and individually blessed?]

Let us add to this some more familiar scriptures. John 6: 44 is perhaps the scripture in the entire Bible we are most familiar with.

John 6:44 No man [no one, it rightly should read] can come to me except the Father which has sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

This is not the end of this subject. We are going to go to Philippians 1:29. Right there, from the Apostle Paul, it tells us:

Philippians 1:29 For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.

In Luke 24: 45, Jesus is speaking to the two men on the road to Emmaus following His resurrection.

Luke 24:45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.

Well brethren, not a single person is ever going to honestly say to God, "I did it my way!" If it is not done God's way, with God's power, it is not going to get done. From beginning to end, we are personally chosen. What we have to do, brethren, can be described as yielding to Him, or cooperating with Him. We would not even be to the place where we could cooperate with Him if He did not turn the key and give us the understanding and the motivation. "For it is God who works in you, both to will, and to do."

Do not forget that all of these things are at the foundation of believing what we believe about Jesus Christ.

Romans 9:6-16 Not as though the word of God has taken none effect. For they are not all Israel which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac [the son of

promise] shall your seed be called. [Isaac was conceived and born miraculously. So are we. He was the type of us.] That is, They which are the children of the flesh [natural-born Israelites], these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise [those who are begotten by God's spirit because God called them and unlocked their minds to understand] are counted for the seed. For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac: (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calls;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he says to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that wills [to follow Jesus Christ as a real Christian should], nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy.

The Bible is indeed, as Herbert Armstrong said a coded book. It is like a picture puzzle whose every piece fits one place in the overall picture of any given biblical subject. The pieces either fit the true picture of the subject that one is pursuing, or they do not fit at all. The pieces cannot be forced to say something that God did not intend, and when they are forced, the picture becomes distorted, a wrong understanding is produced, and therefore a wrong faith.

James 2:5 Hearken, my beloved brethren, Has not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he has promised to them that love him?

It is interesting that this statement precedes the very well known instruction given later in this same chapter regarding faith and works, but there is a misleading translation in this verse we just read. It should read, "Has not God chosen the poor of this world to *be* rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom?" When James wrote it, it was written as a futuristic statement.

We are not in the faith and heirs of the kingdom because we were rich in faith at the time of conversion. If we were rich in faith at the time of conversion, God would not have had to give it to us as a gift. Rather the verse must be understood in the sense that "being rich in faith" is something *we become* because what God originally gave has grown. It has increased. In other words, God did not provide the original gift of faith with the intent that it would remain static within us, but that it would expand. So He enables, He encourages, and expects His original gift of faith that brings conversion to be dynamic, taking root, blossoming and growing to produce much fruit, leading to a deep, abiding trust in every aspect of Christian life.

Now to go back to a previous thought: God must break the pride of our power in order to

enable us to choose humility. Do you understand that? Being humble is a choice, because elements of that pride always continue to exist in our minds, and we have to make choices between the proud way that is against God, or the humble way that submits to God. It is a choice. So what we have regarding spiritual things is owed to God.

Conversion proceeds by choosing to humbly submit to God's simple truths. We, of course, are to grow in grace and the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and so we are going to take some more steps now to do that.

In order to come up with the conclusion that those men who would mislead us on this subject, they almost invariably have to provide exotic, arcane definitions and minutely parse words that lead to convoluted explanations of scriptures. Brethren, God's word to His children, with the aid of what God has done to our minds, is the plain truth, and to those making these false doctrines it is mysterious.

Mr. Armstrong said many times that the best way to understand a truth of God's word is to begin with the clear statements and work toward the more difficult ones. The overwhelming majority of biblical statements are simple and clear. The fuzzy ones are made clear by the simple. Let us go to a simple statement.

It is interesting that this one came up in this sermon, because recently I had a contact with a lady, whose age I do not know, who is not an American, but who is very set in her mind regarding normal Protestant and Catholic beliefs. She of course believes that people go to heaven after they die. In my response to her I used the verse in John 3:13—"And no man has ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven."

She wrote back the following to me: "Well, after Christ went to heaven, everything changed." She said before that, that was the way it was, but once Christ did what He did, everything changed, and now people are going to heaven. That is the way the pride of a carnal mind works. It refuses to accept the simplicity of God's word.

I do not see how Jesus' statement could be much clearer than John 3:13 regarding His own point of origin. Keep your mind on that for a little bit. He is pointing out here His own point of origin. Therefore, by His own testimony, before He was here on earth He was there in heaven, and after He came here, He went back to heaven from where He came. That is very simple, is it not?

Let us add one thing to this. What He said in John 3:13 applies to no other person who has ever lived. *No one!* He is unique. He came from heaven; He went back to heaven, and no human being, following death, has ever done what He did. This in turn leads to another conclusion. In order for one to have first-hand information about heavenly things, one must have had to been in God's presence when the plan was formed and the decisions made about what was going to be done and how it was all going to unfold.

This is interesting, because all the way back in Deuteronomy 30:12 God made a statement through Moses regarding something that comes very close to this.

Deuteronomy 30:11-14 For this commandment which I command you this day, it is not hidden from you, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, Who shall go up for us to heaven and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea that you should say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh unto you, in your mouth, and in your heart, that you may do it.

Jesus said that you do not have to come up to heaven to get the word that it is *near* to you. Jesus is the personification. The Word of God came down from heaven to live among men and reveal the word of God to men, to us. When you put these things together, in order for mankind to have an absolutely true foundational knowledge regarding spiritual things, it must come from Him. All other words of a spiritual or philosophical nature are of lesser value and perhaps totally wrong and completely outside the range of man's knowledge unless *Christ's* word is revealed to him by God Himself. That, brethren, is what is happening to us.

Let us go to John 6:31. This is a very significant sermon that Jesus gave about Himself.

John 6:31-33 Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which comes down from heaven, and gives life unto the world.

John 6:38 For I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me.

John 6:42 And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that he said, I came down from heaven?

John 6:58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eats of this bread shall live forever.

John 6:63 It is the spirit that quickens; the flesh profits nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

Let us back away from this for just a minute. Again, what we see in this is point of origin. How many times did Jesus say, "I came down from heaven?" It is not only point of origin, but also much more besides, but it is the point of origin that gives such a weighty dimension to His words other religious teachers cannot possibly match.

Jesus' claim here excludes even the great Moses, and manna. Moses could only give what he received from God. But Jesus said right in this sermon, "The words I give." So you see, what He is saying without saying it is—"I am God, and My word has the same authority as the Old

Testament." Jesus' point is that Moses merely gave the people directions on how to collect the manna. God was the real Giver. In addition, Jesus adds that even if Moses is considered the giver, he still did not give them the bread which is the food or nourishment that gives spiritual, that is, eternal life.

Thus even the great Moses, Jesus is explaining to these Jews, is lacking compared to Jesus. Those people revered Moses, but as we find later, Paul said, "Well, he was only a servant in Jesus Christ's house."

There is a very interesting statement in I Corinthians 15: 47.

I Corinthians 15:47 The first man [Adam] is of the earth, earth: the second man [Christ] is the Lord from heaven.

Here again we have another apostle giving point of origin for Jesus. This time it is *very* clearly stated. Adam was literally made from the dust of the earth. He neither ascended from a monkey, nor was transformed into a man, nor did he ascend from heaven, but he was a unique *earthly* creation. Adam and Christ are both unique, but there is clearly a contrast of origin.

John 1:18 No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared him.

John 5:37 And the Father himself, which has sent me, has borne witness of me. You have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.

John 6:46 Not that any man has seen the Father, save he which is *of* God, *he* has seen the Father.

I John 4:12 No man has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwells in us, and his love is perfected in us.

I am probably going to be referring to John 1:18 in my exposition here, and that is that these verses have two possible explanations, and I believe, that depending upon how one looks at it, both are correct. The one is to understand what is being said, especially in John 1:18, to comprehend the word "see" or "seen" in the sense of fully perceiving, understanding, comprehending, and grasping spiritually, and thus to truly know Him in a spiritual way. We are going to find that this understanding must be revealed. It must be given by the Son.

The second way of looking at this has a physical application, and that is, no one has literally seen Him. We know that several in the Old Testament had direct personal encounters with God. Abraham, Moses, Joshua, and Samson's parents come quickly to mind. So unless Jesus specifically was the God of the Old Testament, this statement by John about Jesus in John 1:18 would be a lie, because people *have* seen God. Jesus was God, but the One we know of as the Father, who is also God, has never been seen, and it is He who must be revealed by the Son.

We will add more to this. We are going to go to I Corinthians 8:5-6, which at first begins to seem like a contradiction.

I Corinthians 8:5-6 For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.

We will clarify this as we go along, but first I want you to turn to I Timothy 1:17.

I Timothy 1:17 Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the *only* wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

This reinforces I Corinthians 8:5-6. These verses are a confirmation of "one" God, but only when seen and modified in a certain narrow light, when modified by other scriptures. That narrow view is in terms of hierarchical rank, authority, and position. We shall see this clarified in I Corinthians 11:1-3.

I Corinthians 11:1-3 Be you followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances as I delivered them to you. But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.

Now right there is a hierarchical order. Let us understand this. The Bible can, and does use the term "god" generically as a kind, or a class—a family kind, much as we understand the term "humankind," "angel-kind," or "animal kind." The Bible also uses "god" in the sense of responsibility, accountability, and authority. We just saw those verses in I Corinthians 8 and I Timothy 1:17, and here in I Corinthians 11:3. We saw it in its hierarchical, its authoritarian order or sense.

Let us keep adding to this by going to go to the book of Luke again.

Luke 10:22 All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knows who the Son is but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.

The Father and the Son are both God in the generic or family-kind sense, but they also occupy different responsibilities and authority. It is the Son who has always interfaced with mankind; and the Father, by His choice, has remained in the background for future revelation. Thus no man has literally seen God the Father, but *man* has seen, and heard God the Son. The Father's existence, authority and responsibilities must be revealed to mankind by the Son. He has first-hand knowledge of the Father, because that is where He came from. He came from the

Father's presence.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Both Father and Son is God. The one interfaces with man; the other one does not interface with man. They are both God, but one has greater authority than the other. The one called the Father has greater authority than the one called the Son.

John 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.

John 1:14-15 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. [John is saying, "We saw God in the flesh."] John [the Baptizer] bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spoke, He that comes after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.

Now going back to verse one again, when John says, "In the beginning was the Word," this revelation takes us backwards in time beyond Genesis 1 and verse 1. Regardless of what the Gnostics say, if one believes the Bible, the Son is also God, equal to the Father in terms of kind, and *uncreated*. That is very important. What John is doing here is placing Jesus into eternity.

We are going to go now to Isaiah 57. This is an astounding verse. It is so hard for us to wrap our minds around the concept that is given here in Isaiah 57, verses 14 and 15.

Isaiah 57:14-15 And shall say, Cast you up, cast you up, prepare the way, take up the stumbling block out of the way of my people. For thus says the high and lofty One that inhabits eternity . . .

Who is speaking this? It is the *Son*, and He says He inhabits eternity. If He does not inhabit eternity, then He is not God in the same sense as the Father, who is uncreated. That is what He is saying. He is uncreated. Where does eternity begin and end? It has no beginning and end. Jesus Christ *inhabits* eternity.

Isaiah 57:15 For thus says the high and lofty One that inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

Both Beings—the Father and the Son—inhabit eternity. They had no beginning of days nor end of life.

The beginning referred to in John 1:1 is the beginning of God's revelation of Himself and His purpose and plan to man. This beginning includes the creation of the physical universe. It actually reaches all the way back to the time that the Father and the Son were planning what they would do. That was the beginning—the setting of the plan. They were already there at that point in time—two distinct Beings, both of the God-kind, but only one of them, the Son, has ever interfaced with mankind, their creation. Verse 3 says that "all things were made by Him." They were made by the Father through the Son. The Son actually did the work.

The important element to grasp here for the purpose of this sermon is revealed when this is combined with verse 14 (of John 1), and that is, that it was this creating-Spirit-Being (also called "the Word and God") who became flesh like those He created from the dust of the earth.

To spell it out plainly, He who became flesh had to have existed as God before the creation for all that John is saying here to be true.

John the Baptist was literally Jesus' cousin. John's mother Elizabeth was Jesus' mother Mary's sister. John was born six months before Jesus, and when it says that John the Baptist said, "He is preferred before me," he is saying, "*Jesus ranks higher in power and glory; and the reality is, despite His being born after me, He came before me; that is, He existed before me.*" Even that is kind of hard to get your mind around.

Matthew 1:23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

That is what "Emmanuel" means. The name encapsulates the prophecy that "a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son," and the name catches the essence of a miraculous conception and birth as being unique to this one pregnancy and birth. It was the birth of a flesh and blood God-Being achieved without normal human processes. Now how could this be true unless He was already God in the womb, given all the evidence from previous scripture? The name is not implying that He will be God later, or even after His birth, or even later after His resurrection. He was already God when born. He was God before being *placed* in Mary's womb.

John 8:56-59 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, *I am*. Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

It is clear from what the Jews said in verse 57 that they understood that Jesus was saying He had direct and personal contact with Abraham who lived and died about 1800 years before this confrontation with them took place. The Jews thought that Jesus' statement was absurd because they knew that He was not yet fifty years old. Now Jesus' response was to use the name that He gave to Moses at the burning bush. Thus what Jesus did was to lay claim to inhabiting

eternity, that His existence in effect was timeless. He was clearly stating that *He is God!* And now the Jews thought of Him not merely absurd, but blasphemous and worthy of being stoned to death.

Brethren, that was one bold claim, and I dare say that if somebody said that in our presence, we would say, "Come on now," at the very least, . . . unless God, like He had done to the apostles, opened their eyes, and they were blessed.

Philippians 2:5-8 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant; and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Now how could He become humbled—that is, to become lower and of no reputation—if He had not been greater before the humbling?

Paul teaches that Christ "emptied Himself." He did not empty Himself of being God, but of His immortality, privileges, rights and powers of the God-kind. He became a mortal being. He became like us, subject to death, but He was still God. But in order to reach that stage, He had to empty Himself of those things that I mentioned.

We know from Genesis 1:1-3, and from John 1:1-3 that it was Jesus Christ who uttered those words in Genesis 1—"Let there be light; and there was light." It was He who stooped down in the dust of the ground and made Adam and Eve. He made Adam first and breathed into him the breath of life. It was He who created the earth, who created the sun, who created the Milky Way, and who knows what else besides that, but we will just stop right there. Paul said, "All things were made by Him."

Now we are going to compare what Paul wrote in the book of Colossians about Him, because this comes into question every once in a while.

Colossians 1:14-18 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

It was Jesus who always interfaces with mankind who made those statements in Genesis 1, and the entire theme of the context here in the book of Colossians is "*preeminence*"—this time not "point of origin," but *preeminence* as being over and above all things pertaining to this creation.

The issue here is not "order of birth," as the translation "firstborn" might at first seem to apply, but if we turn to Colossians 2:9, he still actually is continuing the same theme. In fact this theme runs all the way through Colossians. What he started in chapter 1, he then fills it in with the material in the other chapters.

Colossians 2:9-10 For in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead [or of *divinity*] bodily. And you are complete in him which is the head of all principality and power.

In verse 10 there is "Head." Again, *preeminence*. Paul is asserting that Christ possessed divinity bodily; that is, in a human form, further confirming His preeminent ranking. This statement agrees perfectly with what John wrote in John 1:14 that "God became flesh and dwelt among us."

The context of Colossians is to confirm to us, that even as Christ is preeminent as Creator, He is likewise preeminent as Redeemer and Instructor of those chosen for salvation. That is very important to the book of Colossians. This is why he says, "For in him dwells all the fullness of divinity bodily" right after he got done talking about demons—"the rudiments of the world," and then later in the end of the chapter he talks about worshipping angels (demons) once again. Paul was warning, "Stay away from them and their instruction. Everything you need is found in the Son who is preeminent as Instructor and Redeemer as our High Priest."

Colossians also further confirms John 1:3 statement that everything was made by Him, and thus the overall force of Colossians' theme is that He preceded all created things, thus strongly confirming that He is uncreated, and that there never was a time that He did not exist.

We are now going to turn to Revelation 3:14. Brethren, this is the verse that receives the most attention by those who would like to break your faith in the divinity of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 3:14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write: These things says the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.

The entire focus of those who would try to deceive others is focused on one word in particular to support their concept, and that is the word "beginning." It is the Greek *arche* (pronounced ar-kay). It literally means "beginning," but it has a number of specific applications. This word appears 58 times in the New Testament in any of the following three senses:

number 1: The beginning in terms of time, as with the start of a line on a piece of paper, or the beginning of like things to follow; a series of similar things. [This would mean that we should understand this verse in the sense that He was the first being created. Can you see why they would jump on that one?]

number 2: It is used as the beginning in terms of being the cause, or author of some series of activities. [This would mean that we should

understand this verse in the sense that He is the Author and Creator of all things.]

number 3: It is used as the beginning in terms of primacy, authority, rule, name, principal, rank, and dignity. [In other words, He is the Top.]

We are going to begin expanding on this with number 2—that of being the cause.

number 2 is possibly a true application because it is clearly supported by other very clear contexts such as John 1: 3 and Colossians 1, that He is indeed our Creator. However, those who research into the word-meaning usage report that *arche* is very rarely ever used even in the common Greek literature in the sense of being the beginning of a cause, let alone in the Bible. See, "the beginning of a cause." In the Bible, when it is being stated that He is our Creator, other words than *arche* are used, which is very interesting; thus number 2, though possible, is very weak.

Also to understand *arche* as "beginning a cause" is not the end to the context of the reasons why Christ used various titles throughout Revelation 2 and 3 in His messages to the church; most especially, it does not fit the message to the Laodiceans. All you have to do is read what He says to the Laodiceans, and you will see that He is not intending that He is first in beginning of cause. Therefore, the conclusion is that number 2 would be an acceptable but weaker application here because Christ is not seen as being the cause or author of anything coming into existence in this Laodicean message context.

What about number 1, which would indicate that He is a created being? First, recall that this usage indicates the first in a line of anything that follows is not the only possible use of this word, and it cannot—I repeat, "*cannot*"—be shown to be the only possible use of *arche*. There are two other uses of it. This means that this usage has weaknesses. There must be scriptural support from other verses to support this concept. That being said, where *are* other scriptural supports that reinforce this concept? There are none.

It is right here, brethren, that the arcane, convoluted and twisting explanations of verses that I mentioned earlier come into play by those who attempt to persuade us that Jesus is a created being. They do this convoluted twisting; attempting to align scriptures with their context, and it is hard because it does not fit.

The scripture affirms many times that He is an eternal uncreated Being of the God-kind, that He is the equal of the Father in regards to kind. This is why I said at the very beginning of the message that one must start with clear scriptures, allowing them to refine and thus make clear the vague ones. Evidence is supported in "the-mouths-of-two-or-three-witnesses" principle. Remember that. Otherwise, contradictions begin to be produced, and two or three witnesses in the scripture regarding Him being created cannot be found; thus, clarity is not advanced, but rather a slippery deception is obtained.

This leaves number 3 as being the correct application of *arche* in Revelation 3: 14. It indicates primacy in regard to rule, authority, rank, name, dignity; in other words, preeminence in terms of His office as Head of the churches He addresses in Revelation 2 and 3, and especially in

regard to the message to the Laodiceans. What is He saying to the Laodiceans? "You had better repent. I am your Lord and Master, and I will spit you out of My mouth if you do not, and nobody can save you." He is appearing to them as their Lord and Master. number 3 works.

The New International Version translates that phrase "He is the Ruler of God's creation." See, there is rank. I looked this up in every Bible translation I have available to me. They either allowed it to remain as "beginning" as in the King James Version, or changed the word "beginning" to "source," "origin," or "ruler."

I did the same search using commentaries I have available to me, and those who made any comment regarding this word unanimously agreed with the Bible translation of "source" and "rulership." Not even one hinted at Him being created.

John 17:5 And now, O Father, glorify you me with your own self with the glory which I had with you before the world was.

At the very end of His earthly life Jesus is confirming His eternal existence with the Father.

Brethren, we are very close to Passover, and it is time to once again reaffirm our faith in the Father, the Son—our Savior and Lord—and the New Covenant, with the purpose they have individually drawn us into. But please, do not allow an attack like this detestable doctrine that seeks to undermine our faith by throwing us into doubtful confusion.

Men under Satan's influence continually attempt to denigrate the immensity of the price paid for our liberty. The Living Word and the written word both confirm that our Savior is uncreated God. No lesser payment for our sins would satisfy God the Father's standard of justice. We are worth that much to Him, and He expects us to reciprocate appreciation through willing submission to His way of life. Our God paid a great, huge awesome price that should humble us, and move us to submit to Him.