

DID JESUS CHRIST PRE-EXIST IN OLD TESTAMENT TIMES?

One of the best known verses in the scriptures to Jews is **Deuteronomy 6:4**, a verse which Jews refer to as the Shema. If you'd like to turn there this is what **Deuteronomy 6:4** says. "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!"

To Jews God is one being and they insist that there is only one being in the Godhead. As a consequence they reject Jesus Christ as Saviour and reject His claim that He is a God being.

I remember having a biblical discussion one time with a man who was a Christadelphian and realized we were on common ground when I found out that he didn't believe in the trinity. As the discussion progressed I was rather surprised that one of their doctrines which he held quite vigorously was that Jesus Christ did not come into existence until His begetting in the womb of Mary.

I threw out a few scriptures to refute that idea and got a few passionate but rather convoluted responses. Then I quoted **John 1:1** to him which says: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." I argued that there were two beings – one was God and the other being was with God and He was also God because God is a family made up of at least two beings.

His response was that the Greek word "Logos" here used for "Word" does not mean another being and that the Greek word Logos really means "the thought or utterance" of God. I thought to myself, "I've heard that one before. So that's where that Worldwide evangelist got that one from." The basic thrust of his argument and why he interpreted **John 1:1** that way was to support the idea that Jesus only came into true existence at the time of his begetting in Mary's womb.

In this article I would like to answer the question, "Did Jesus Christ pre-exist in Old Testament times?" At the end of this article I would also like to explain why it is so important that this question has to be proved in the affirmative.

First of all, let's look at the words of Jesus Himself and find out whether He claimed to have pre-existed in Old Testament times. Let's read what Jesus claimed about Himself over in **John 8:56**:

"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw *it* and was glad.' Then the Jews said to Him, 'You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?' Jesus said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.' Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple" (**John 8:56-58**).

Jesus claimed to have seen Abraham and when the Jews questioned Him about His claim to have seen Abraham He said that before Abraham was I AM.

When God first revealed Himself to Moses in **Exodus 3**, Moses asked Him what His name was. 'I AM WHO I AM,' was the awesome reply. 'Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" Jesus clearly claimed to be this same Being—the 'I AM' of **Exodus 3:14**, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (**verse 15**).

'I AM' is related to the personal name for God in the Old Testament, the Hebrew name YHWH. When Yahweh appears in our English Bibles, it is commonly written in all capital letters as LORD. When Jesus made this startling statement, the Jews knew exactly what He meant. They picked up stones to kill Him because they thought He was guilty of blasphemy.

To emphasise this even further we find in the book of John that Christ used the phrase “I am” to describe Himself in seven different ways. He said:

“I am the bread of life” (**John 6:35**); “I am the light of the world” (**John 8:12**); “I am the door” (**John 10:7**); “I am the good shepherd” (**John 10:11**); “I am the resurrection and the life” (**John 11:25**); “I am the way and the truth and the life” (**John 14:6**) and “I am the vine” (**John 15:1**).

The New Living Translation renders **Philippians 2:5-7** the following way: “Your attitude should be the same that Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he did not demand and cling to his rights as God. He made himself nothing; he took the humble position of a slave and appeared in human form.” He was God to begin with, then emptied Himself of that power and came into the world in human form.

In **John 17:4-5** we read the words of Jesus spoken shortly before his arrest in the garden of Gethsemane. He said: “I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.” He said at other times that He came from above and that He was about to return to His Father in heaven. Jesus left no ambiguity that He existed before His supernatural begetting in the womb of Mary.

The apostle Paul also supported Jesus claim to be the I AM who spoke to Moses over in **1 Corinthians 10**. He speaks about the Israelites who came out of Egypt under Moses and then in **verse 4** he says about them that they “all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.” He identifies the God being that interacted with the Israelites in the Old Testament at the time of the Exodus, not as God the Father but as Jesus Christ.

We’ve looked at the claims of the New Testament. What about the Old Testament? Could we prove to someone who is a Jew from the Old Testament alone that there is more than one being in the Godhead?

First of all, let’s go back to our opening verse and ask what does the Bible itself mean in **Deuteronomy 6:4** where it says the Lord God is one. The word “one” is translated from the Hebrew word “ehad”. What does the word “ehad” mean?

The Expositor's Bible commentary has this to say: "To the Jews verse 4 is not only an assertion of monotheism, it is also an assertion of the numerical oneness of God...This kind of oneness, however, runs contrary to the use of 'ehad' in the sense of a unity made up of several parts. In **Exodus 26:6-11**, the fifty gold clasps are used to hold the curtains together so that the tent would be a unit (ehad)".

The Companion Bible says: "one. Heb. 'ehad = a **compound unity** (Lat. unus), **one made up of others**: **Genesis 1:5**, one of seven; **2:11**, one of four; **2:21**, one of twenty-four."

In **Zechariah 2:8-9** we read a very interesting Old Testament prophecy that shows that there are at least two members in the God Family both referred to as the Lord of hosts.

Zechariah writes: “For thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘He sent Me after glory, to the nations which plunder you; for he who touches you touches the apple of His eye. For surely I will shake My hand against them, and they shall become spoil for their servants. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me.’” The Lord of hosts here says: “Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent Me [the Lord of hosts].”

Another very interesting verse in the Old Testament is **Proverbs 30:4**. In this verse we read: “Who has ascended into heaven, or descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has bound the waters in a garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? **What *is* His name, and what *is* His Son’s name if you know?**”

There is also **Psalms 110:1** which Jesus used to confound the Pharisees which says: “The LORD said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’” Jesus asked the Pharisees how the Christ can be Son of David if David here calls Him Lord. It’s also pretty obvious, just like the prophecy we read in Zechariah that there are two beings here both referred to as Lord.

The use of the word God in the Bible is dual. It refers to the personal name of God the Father, the ruler over the whole universe. It also is a reference to the family of God – one family made up of many members as the plural Hebrew word for God Elohim indicates. God not only is the name of God the Father but is also a KIND of being – a type of being greater than the angels – the God kingdom.

The Hebrew word “Yahweh” is an interesting word. Some translations of it include the Eternal and the Everliving One. I remember hearing a sermon by a United minister who asked a Hebrew scholar about the word and the Hebrew scholar felt that the most accurate translation of it is “The Timeless One” as one who transcends time.

Hugh Ross, author of “The Creator and the Cosmos” has these words which back up that way of translating God’s name. He writes:

“A mathematical theorem developed by Stephen Hawking and Roger Penrose in 1970 establishes that if the universe contains mass, and if its dynamics are governed by general relativity, then time itself must be finite and must have been created when the universe was created. It proves there must exist a CAUSE responsible for bringing the universe into existence, a cause that exists and operates “transcendently,” outside and independent of matter, energy, and all cosmic space-time dimensions” (Reasons to Believe, Issue 3, 2000, www.reasonstobelieve.org).

According to the scientists physical time, as we know it, was created at the same time that the universe was created as hard as that is for our minds to grasp. That leads me to the question of when did God plan the creation of the universe? That question seems to imply that there is some equivalent of time in the spiritual realm that is different to the physical time of our universe.

The Old Testament prophecy that tells us where the Messiah would be born is found over in **Micah 5:2** if you’d like to turn there. It says here in **Micah 5:2**: “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *though* you are little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth *are* from of old, from everlasting.”

The Messiah, Jesus Christ, has existed from everlasting. He has existed for all of physical time as we know it. Paul says a similar thing in **Hebrews 7:3**. In that chapter he reveals that Melchizedek, the king and high priest of Salem who met Abraham, was none other than Jesus Christ. In **verse 3** he says that He was “without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually.”

At the beginning of this article I said that I would explain why it is so important that Christ had to have pre-existed in Old Testament times.

To answer that question we need to establish one more fact about Jesus Christ. Not only has He existed before anything else was created but He was the one who created the universe under the direction and authority of God the Father.

In **Ephesians 3:9** Paul says: "God who created all things through Jesus Christ." Jesus Christ was the workman who created the universe following the directions of God the Father. What this means is that Jesus Christ created all of mankind.

How is it that Christ's one life was worth more than all of humanity put together? Jesus Christ was OUR CREATOR AND HIS LIFE THEREFORE WAS WORTH MORE THAN ALL OF MANKIND'S PUT TOGETHER! This is how he could pay the price for all mankind's sins.

To deny the pre-existence of Jesus Christ in Old Testament times is to deny Jesus Christ was our Creator. If Jesus Christ was not our creator and only first came into being through the supernatural begetting of Mary then He was not fit to be our Saviour.

Thankfully Jesus Christ has pre-existed in Old Testament times and was our Creator and was fit to be our Saviour. He emptied Himself of all His divine powers to do just that.

One moment He was the all-powerful Creator of the universe and the next moment He became, as amazing as it sounds, as big as a grain of sand in the womb of Mary. Let that sink in for a moment.

He was then born, grew up just like we do, faced every kind of temptation that we endure in our lives, lived a sinless life and then voluntarily, knowing He could back out at any time, allowed Himself to be tortured and brutally murdered. Our Lord and our God really is an awesome God to do all of that for us.