

even created Adam. Jesus was “foreknown”, but he did not exist *in reality* before he was born to Mary in Bethlehem.

Paul also tells us that, “God sent forth his Son” only when “**the fullness of time had come**” (Galatians 4:4-5).

Hebrews states this teaching yet again: “God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son” (Hebrews 1:1-2).

Jesus, “sent” by God

Jesus tells us that he was sent by God: “My food is to do the will of him who sent me” (John 4:34).

Many people assume from statements like these, that Jesus must have been with God in heaven before he was born. We need to be aware that God spoke of Old Testament prophets being sent to deliver his message (2 Chronicles 36:15). In New Testament times, God sent John the Baptist. “There was a man **sent from God**, whose name was John” (John 1:6).

Nobody claims that John the Baptist was in heaven before he was “sent”. Neither was Jesus. They both spoke God’s words to the people during their lifetimes.

Jesus said “**I have come down from heaven**” (John 6:38). How are we to understand this verse? In the same way we do when the Bible tells us that bread came down from heaven. Jesus said that God “gave them bread (manna) from heaven to eat” (John 6:31). The manna did not physically come down from a literal heaven. Rather, the manna **was God-given**, as was Jesus.

There are many things we must understand in a spiritual way. For example, John the Baptist said that Jesus was “before me”. He was in the sense of being more

important in the purpose of God, great as John was.

Jesus said, “I am from above. You are of this world”. He meant that God was his father, and he reflected God’s mind better than anyone. He showed us God’s character.

Jesus often spoke figuratively when revealing spiritual truths. We must always look at passages carefully if we are to appreciate the profound words of Jesus.

To summarize:

- (1) The Bible does not say that Jesus was present at creation.
- (2) The angels, who were created before the foundations of the earth (Job 38:7) never mention Jesus. They would have done, had he existed then.
- (3) The Old Testament always speaks about the life of Jesus in the future, not in the past.
- (4) Even in his glorified, immortal state, a) Jesus is spoken of as a man, and b) he is still subject to God, his father.
- (5) Jesus has always been in the mind of God. He was to be the saviour of the world. He did not exist before his birth. We eagerly await his return to the earth, to establish God’s kingdom.
“I am coming soon. Amen. Come Lord Jesus!” (Revelation 22:20).

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BASIC BIBLE TRUTHS

When Did Jesus First Exist?

When you have read this leaflet you will know the answers to these questions:

1. Is Jesus part of the Godhead?
2. Did Jesus live in heaven before he was born?

1. IS JESUS PART OF THE GODHEAD?

The relationship between God and Jesus has puzzled many people down the centuries.

If it can be shown from the Bible that Jesus is not part of God, it will go a long way to answering the main question posed in this leaflet; “When did Jesus first exist?” If Jesus is not ‘God’, then he could not have been in heaven before he was born, any more than we were in heaven before we were born.

a) Listen to the angel Gabriel, speaking to Mary: “Mary ... you will conceive in your womb and bear a son ... Jesus. He will be great and will be called the **Son of the Most High**. And the Lord God will give to him the

throne of his father David ... the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy – the **Son of God**” (Luke 1:30-35).

Note these points:

- (1) God was to be the child’s father, Mary his mother. In a very real sense, he was to be the Son of God. The Bible **never** refers to Jesus as ‘God the Son’.
- (2) God is **to give him** the throne of David. Jesus cannot therefore, be co-equal with God, as he receives this blessing from him.
- (3) Do you know of any son who is as old as his father? It is impossible. A father always exists before his son. Jesus cannot be co-eternal with God.

b) Listen to Jesus himself: “The Father is greater than I” (John 14:28). Not only are God and Jesus separate beings, father and son, but God is greater. Jesus said so! They cannot be equal.

c) Listen to the New Testament writers: The Apostle John said “grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared Him” (John 1:17,18). Jesus is God’s only son, totally in tune with God’s spiritual ways. Because of this he is “in the bosom of the Father”. Nobody can be in their own bosom.

The Apostle Paul said, “There is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all” (1 Timothy 2:5-6). Could anything be more simply stated?

Some will claim that Jesus was only a man during his ‘time on earth’. They claim that Jesus reverted to being God after he went to heaven. But Paul told us that he is a mediator, and **a man, now**. Jesus also

said “All authority in heaven and on earth **has been given to me**” (Matthew 28:18). God has **given** and Jesus is the man who has **received**. How can they be equal, and the same being? Peter said, after the resurrection of Jesus, “This Jesus, God raised up”. He now sits “**exalted at the right hand of God**” (Acts 2:32-36). Moreover, Jesus is to sit at God’s right hand until God sends him back to the earth to be king of the world (Acts 3:19-21). That is the future for Jesus.

Paul confirms that God “will judge the world in righteousness by **a man whom he has appointed**” (Acts 17:30-32). God’s ultimate purpose is to abolish death. Even then, “the Son himself will also be subjected to him” (1 Corinthians 15:28).

Even in eternity, God is still the supreme father and Jesus the glorious son. The wonderful vision seen in Revelation 5:11-14 clearly states “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb (Jesus) be blessing and honour and glory and might forever and ever!”

John said that those who abide in the teaching of Jesus have **both the Father and the Son** (2 John verse 9). The “Father” and the “Son” are distinct beings, with different roles to play in saving those who keep God’s word.

2. DID JESUS LIVE IN HEAVEN BEFORE HE WAS BORN?

We have already seen that Jesus is not God. Therefore he could not have existed before he was born.

As we look at a few scriptures which need careful thought to understand, we must keep in mind these two passages:

- (1) Acts 15:18 “Known to God from eternity are all His works” (NKJV)

- (2) Romans 4:17 “God ... calls those things which do not exist as though they did” (NKJV)

Future events in God’s plan are so certain, that God can speak about them as though they have already happened. Because of this, some Bible passages can be read as though Jesus existed before he was born.

However, God spoke about other people in exactly the same way. Jeremiah tells us that God said to him “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations” (Jeremiah 1:4-5).

We don’t believe Jeremiah was in heaven before he was born. He was in God’s plan. Therefore God spoke of knowing Jeremiah before he was born. He was **in God’s mind, but did not exist in reality** until his birth.

Paul tells us that both he and other Christians in his day existed in God’s mind before he created mankind: “**he chose us in him before the foundation of the world** ... he predestined us” (Ephesians 1:4,5). Exactly so. God knew from the beginning what he was going to do. But neither Paul, nor believers, actually existed before they were born.

The same is true of Jesus. He also was in the mind of God from the very beginning. However, Peter draws a distinction between Jesus being in the mind and purpose of God, and his existence later as a real person. Peter tells us that Jesus redeems us with his “precious blood”. He “was **foreknown before the foundation of the world** but was made **manifest in the last times** for your sake” (1 Peter 1:19-20). Peter tells us the simple truth. God knew all about the work he had in mind for Jesus before he