

A CASE FOR THE PRE-EXISTENCE OF THE SON OF GOD

I propose the following *eight proofs* regarding the pre-existence of *Jesus Christ* as the *Son of God* and second person in the *Biblical Godhead*:

Proof (1): I Am. The most basic proof of Jesus Christ's pre-existence as the Son of God, and an assumption that must be made at the outset, is his divinity. Jesus being fully God implies his *eternality*. We see from the "*I am*" statements found in Jesus' own words, that He is claiming to be equal to God, the Father. In chapter 8 of John's gospel, Jesus provides a direct claim to deity and pre-existence through the most notable "*I am*" statement. Jesus tells the Jews, "*If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death.*" (*Jn 8:52*). The Jews fire back at Jesus by asking if he is greater than Abraham. After all, Abraham died and so did all the other prophets of God. So how can this man claim to have power over death? How can he speak with authority regarding Abraham as if he knows him? Jesus, they argue isn't even fifty years old, how can he have seen Abraham? Jesus then makes the claim to deity and pre-existence: "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am,*" (*Jn 8:58*).

Jesus' use of "*I am*" harkens the Jewish hearer back to the scene of Moses and the flame of fire that appears from the bush in *Exodus 3*. God chooses this title, "*I Am*," to reveal to Moses who He was. "*I am*" is a name of revelation and Jesus likewise used it to reveal who He was to the Jews. "*I am*" is reserved for Yahweh. Christ is revealing to his hearers, in the same way the Father did with Moses, that He is God and He existed before Abraham. This claim of deity was blasphemous to the Jews and that's exactly why they picked up stones to stone him.

Another closely related verse is found in *John's gospel*. In *John 1:15*, we're told of the words of *John the Baptist* describing *Jesus*, the Son of God,

“This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.” According to the Scriptural record, *John the Baptist* was born before *Jesus*. Hence, the Baptist’s words can only be understood to mean that *Jesus*, the Son of God, existed before *John was born*, which verifies the pre-existence of the *Son*.

Proof (2): The Alpha and the Omega. In the book of Revelation, the Apostle John reveals two inseparable facts regarding the person Jesus Christ, that come from the mouth of Jesus Christ when he appears before John. In Revelation, Christ is *“He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen”* yet also the *“Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty”* (Rev 1:8, 18). Christ, the God-man, was pierced and died. This was his mission. However, our sacrificial lamb is also the Alpha and Omega, the ‘beginning’ and ‘ending’. He is without beginning and he is without end. He is the eternal and pre-existent Son of God.

Proof (3): Voluntary Humiliation. The Apostle Paul, in his inspired writing to the believers in Philippi, explains how the preexistent Christ actually stripped off his robes of majesty and glory to become humble; to become nothing. The Son of God voluntarily humbled himself, becoming like man, in order to fulfill his mission. To leave the thrones of heaven and the worship of angels and condescend requires infinite humility. The Son of God’s voluntary humiliation logically requires pre-existence...

“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.” —Philippians 2:5-8

Notice, Paul explains that the Son of God actually *humbled* himself in order to take the form of a servant in the likeness of man. *Humbling himself* demanded three irrefutable absolutes:

- 1) Impersonal concepts cannot humble themselves; only a *person* can humble himself.
- 2) He obviously had consciousness.
- 3) He had existence before the incarnation.

The other foundational argument for the pre-existence of the Son of God in this passage is from the word “*robbery*”. The word is defined as seizing or taking. Paul is assuming that Jesus was equal with God and that he didn’t need to try to seize or steal equality with God, for *He is equal with God*. A *thought* or *concept* in the exhaustive foreknowledge of God cannot accurately be “*equal to God*” because a thought or concept, even though divine, does not possess all the attributes of divinity. He did not “take advantage of or exploit what he already possessed.” The pre-existent Son of God possessed equality with God and humbled Himself at the incarnation by putting on the form of man.

Proof (4): He Was Sent. The incarnation of Jesus, as the Son of God, can be argued as an act of creation if we only look at the physical beginning and birth of the baby Jesus. However, even shallow study of the scriptures will show that the *Son of God* was *sent* to Earth and *given* to mankind through the incarnation. *Isaiah 9:6*, a verse championing the deity of Christ (but also an often twisted proof text for *Oneness theology*) actually makes this subtle distinction...

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given...” —Isaiah 9:6a

Giving or *sending someone* logically implies that this someone existed before they were sent. The same basic argument holds for the Son of God. Jesus, in his prayer to the Father in *John 17*, explicitly claims existing in heaven before the incarnation:

“I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” —John 17:4-5

Notice Jesus words: *“The glory which I had with thee before the world was”*; this claim goes far beyond the incarnation and beyond creation of the world to the place of the beginning of beginnings - the Son was with the Father before everything our minds can imagine. Verse 4 of chapter 17 also classifies the Son’s work as that which he was *sent* to do by the Father along with:

a) *John 3:34 - “...he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God”*

b) *John 5:36-38 - “...the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.”*

c) *John 7:29 - “I am from him (God), and he hath sent me”*

d) *John 11:42 - “...I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.”*

Proof 5: The Demons Knew Who He Was. When our Lord encountered the demon possessed men in *Matthew 8:28-34* and *9:27* and in *Luke 4:40-41*, we see a common theme. The demons knew who Jesus was and they were afraid of him. They called him the Son of God and the Son of David, both not only messianic titles, but evidence that they knew the Son before the incarnation. Demons are spiritual beings outside of time and space as we know it and they had no confusion over who Jesus was. Satan, the devil himself, also knew Jesus as the Son of God and did not need to be informed of his true nature like man did. The pre-existence of the Son is the only logical reason why the demons and devil were so familiar with him after the incarnation. In addition, *Matthew 1:23* builds structure around the Son’s incarnation: *“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.”* As a reference to the prophecy of Isaiah, the man Jesus was God in human flesh to fulfill the prophecy. The demons knew Jesus to be *Immanuel*. If Jesus was the Son and the Son was *Immanuel* meaning, *“God*

with us”, then the Son is God and we know that God is *eternal, pre-existent,* and *immutable (He cannot change).*

“*Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.*” —**Heb 13:8**

Proof 6: Old Testament Appearances Of The Son. The story of Samson’s parents in *Judges 13* is a fascinating testimony to the pre-existence of the second person in the Trinity, the Son. There are other similar passages in the Old Testament referencing the Angel of the Lord with illusions to the Son of God; however *Judges 13* is the most interesting example. Samson’s mother and wife to Manoah was a barren woman. Her plight is not unique in the Bible as God uses barrenness numerous times throughout redemptive history for his purposes. Manoah’s wife was visited by a man of God whose appearance was like that of an Angel of Jehovah. This “Angel’s” conversation with Manoah’s wife was strikingly similar to conversations that the Archangel Gabriel had with *John the Baptist’s* father, Zechariah, and the virgin Mary in *Luke 1*. It would be a common error to read through *Judges 13*, see the term “*Angel*” used to describe this heavenly being and fail to see the subtle nuances of the passage that prove the pre-incarnate existence and activity of the Son of God. These subtleties occur in three specific verses and they are as follows: When Manoah asks the *Angel* if he is the man who spoke to his wife in *Judges 13:11*, the Angel replies with, “*I am*”. Now, granted, the “*I am*” in *Judges 13* is different than the “*I AM that I AM*” in *Exodus 3:14* in that it is a different word; however, the response points to the deity of the one standing before them rather than referring to himself as simply a messenger of the Lord. However, this response is not enough on its own, so we must build the case further.

Later in the story from *Judges 13*, in *verse 18*, Manoah asks the Angel what his name is and the Angel gives a curious answer. In *Luke 1*, the angel clearly gives his name as *Gabriel* and tells how he stands in the presence of God. However, the *Angel* in *Judges 13*, asks in reply, “*Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret?*” It is interesting to note that the word translated “*secret*” means “*wonderful*” and is essentially the same Hebrew word translated “*wonderful*”, as a name of the Messiah, in *Isaiah 9:6*. So,

again we see a response by the “*Angel*” pointing to his deity and his uniqueness. In *verse 20*, Manoah and his wife fall on their faces in worship and fear and in *verse 22* Manoah says, “*We shall surely die, because we have seen God.*” This phenomenal statement emphasizes the point that this Angel is in fact *God*. They came face to face with God.

Another O.T. proof of the Son of God’s eternity and pre-existence is found in *Isaiah’s* vision of the Lord on the throne.

“In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.” — Isa 6:1-5

The prophet Isaiah comes face-to-face with the Son of God, the Lord (*Adonai*), on the throne. The majestic Lord sits on the throne and the seraphim around Him sing his praises. “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts!” Isaiah states in *verse 5* that he has seen the King, the LORD (*Jehovah*) of hosts, and his sin is atoned for by the coal taken from the throne and touched to his lips by the seraphim. Isaiah is at the point of despair and undone in the face of the Lord. However, when the Lord asks, “*Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?*” (*Isaiah 6:8*). Isaiah immediately responds, “*Here am I; send me.*” The Lord sends him to speak on His behalf regarding the child to be born, the heir to the throne of David, and the one through whom we will be healed by His stripes. The Lord sends *Isaiah* to proclaim the *Christ*, the coming Son of God. Some

might assume this account is merely *God the Father* sending *Isaiah* out to speak of the Son whom is coming at the incarnation. However, in *John 12:36-43* the Scripture explain to us exactly who *Isaiah* saw. In *verse 37*, John proclaims that the prophesy of *Isaiah 53:1*, “*Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?*” was fulfilled. In *verse 41* John explains *Isaiah 6*: “*These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.*” We know whom *Isaiah* spoke of, the *Son of God*. Thus, the *Lord* that sent *Isaiah* was in fact the *Son of God* sitting on the throne, pre-incarnate and eternal.

However, there is another strong Scriptural proof that offers verification for these O.T. appearances of the pre-incarnate *Son of God*. The Apostle John lays out the undeniable truth of Jesus’ deity and eternal existence in the first chapter of his Gospel. In defining Jesus as the Word of God, and that the Word was God and was with God, he shows how Jesus was the incarnate form of God and the separate but equal Word of God who tabernacles with His creation. To further explain that the Son is a unique person sent by Jehovah in the form of a man, he tells us in *1:18*, “*No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*” Thus, no one has ever *seen God*, the only God, except the one He made known, who is the Son. This means Manoah and his wife did not see Jehovah; nor did *Isaiah* (and others in the O.T.), and yet, many times, like in *Judges 13* and *Isaiah 6*, men saw what the Scriptures refer to as *the Lord* or *God*. Who did they see? The answer is obvious. They saw Him whom God made known, the One who was at His side, the Son of God. This logic is further enforced by *Judges 13:16*: The Angel of the Lord is speaking to Manoah and tells him, “*I will not eat of thy bread: and if thou wilt offer a burnt offering, thou must offer it unto the LORD....*” Manoah confesses that he saw God in *verse 22*, yet the Angel tells him to offer it to “*Lord*” (*Jehovah*). Therefore, since we understand the Angel of the Lord in *Judges 13* to be deity per the testimony of Manoah

and his wife, and God is telling Manoah to prepare his offering to “the Lord” (*Jehovah*), we must assume that the *Angel of the Lord* here is the *Son of God* actively working well before the incarnation.

Proof 7: The Agent of Creation. Not only was the *Son of God* not a created being or a new manifestation at the incarnation, but the complete opposite is true. The Son of God was the agent of creation of the entire universe – whether physical or spiritual. Scripture makes this point clear. Paul lays out in *Colossians 1:16* that all things were created by the Son, all things were created through the Son, and all things were created for the Son. There is little room to argue against the pre-existence of the Son when we learn that He was the agent of creation. A concept has neither desires or a will to take creative action. In the awe inspiring introduction to John’s Gospel, we again learn in *John 1:2*, as mentioned above, the Word was with God and the Word was God and in *verse 3* we read, “*All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.*” All things were made through the Word, which is the Son, and not anything was made that wasn’t made without the Word, which is the Son of God. This passage may not make the inner workings of the Father-Son relationship of the Trinity any more comprehensible, but it does continue to enforce the Son’s pre-existence before the incarnation as He was *with* the Father before time began and was the one through which the entire physical universe and spiritual realm was made. Finally, the book of *Hebrews* opens with the same Son-exalting language. *Hebrews 1:2* tells of how God the Father has chosen in these last days to speak through His Son and in order to not confuse this Son with any created being he defines the Son with, “*...whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.*” The *Son of God* the Father whom is the heir of all things – echoing *Colossians 1*, that all things were created for the Son. Hence, these divinely inspired writers were moved upon by the Holy Ghost to pen these words

so as to exalt Jesus as the pre-existent Son of God who has existed forever in eternity past.

Proof 8: God Is And Has Always Been 'Love'. The *Apostle John's* first Epistle, chapter four and verse eight, authoritatively tells us, “*He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.*” Besides many other wonderful truths, this verse teaches us that (1) *God is love* and, (2) to be considered *loving, one must love*. All sorts of people are fond of repeating the Christian truth that “*God is love*”. However, few seem to notice that the words “*God is love*” have no real meaning unless God (*the Godhead*) contains at least two persons. *Love* is something that one person has for another person. If the eternal Godhead consisted of merely a single person, then before God created all other creatures, He could not love because there would have been no one to love. The following *sylllogism* summarizes the argument:

1. Major premise: *The Scriptures authoritatively teach God is love and He is immutable (Mal 3:6; 1 Jn 4:8).*
2. Minor premise: *Love must have an object and the supreme object of God's love has always been Christ (Jn 17:24).*

“Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.”

—John 17:24

Conclusion: *Two persons of the Godhead, God the Father and God the Son, have always existed or God cannot be 'love' in eternity past.*

CONCLUSION

Thus, we conclude, the Biblical evidence is overwhelming in the case of the eternality and pre-existence of the Son of God.

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