

Focus on the Kingdom

Vol. 10 No. 2

Anthony Buzzard, editor

November, 2007

Jesus Was Not a Trinitarian A Call to Return to the Creed of Jesus

In this new book Anthony Buzzard invites scholars and laymen alike to take seriously Jesus' Jewish creed, his recitation of the Shema, "Hear, O Israel," which proclaims God to be one single Lord. Defining God and His Son biblically remains part of the unfinished work of the Reformation. The evidence placed before the reader shows that a major paradigm shift is needed if Christians are to worship their God in spirit and in truth, uncluttered by the philosophical and confusing ideas about God which form part of received church tradition. Available from 800-347-4261 (404-362-0052) or www.restorationfellowship.org (465 pages, \$18)

Jesus: The Bridge Between the Covenants

by Terry Anderson

Have you ever had someone say to you, "I believe in Jesus, but I just can't buy the creation story"? I remember a conversation with my father once about 34 years ago. We were discussing the Bible and he asked me if I really believed the creation story, and I said that I did, much to his amazement. I am relatively certain that, as a self-professing "Christian," he was not alone. And in fact, I would dare to assume that it might be the prevailing sentiment among non-evangelical churchgoers today. Add to that some of the other miracles of the Hebrew Bible, such as the Flood and the Exodus, and you have a number of historical events that severely challenge a lot of nominal Christians. They do not believe that these momentous events are real history.

The same people who find it difficult to accept the miracle narratives of the Old Testament may also find it difficult to believe that Jesus actually walked on water or changed water to wine or resurrected Lazarus. When you begin playing editor-in-chief with the Scriptures, you can quickly find yourself justifying any rejection of a portion of the Scriptures that doesn't fit your personal worldview. In many cases one of two mental processes is occurring. Either the individual holds that all that is required is to believe that Jesus is the Savior, and what Jesus said or did doesn't matter. Or, Jesus is some kind of metaphor for a type of Eastern mystical righteousness, and therefore who Jesus was or is and *what he taught* is not as important a vague Zen "feeling" of goodness inspired by the do-it-yourself image of Jesus in their minds.

It seems incongruous and contradictory that anyone would call themselves "Christian" and at the same time deny parts of that same Bible that Jesus and the Apostles confirmed over and over again. It's like saying to God, "I accept your Son as Savior and Lord but I reject what he said and did. And by the way, I also reject what you have said about Jesus." You can't have it both ways. When Jesus says, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life" you reject his words at your own peril. It seems fashionable these days to accept a designer Messiah, one who fits nicely into a modern amalgamation of today's lifestyle and belief sets. I don't think that will go over big with the Father who says in Malachi 3:6, "For I, the Lord, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed." God does not alter His plans and laws to fit conveniently into a generation's lifestyle or norms. We as created beings must be molded into God's ideal, that being the man Messiah Jesus (1 Tim. 2:5).

So what is true belief all about? It is about Jesus being the link and the bridge between the first covenant and the second covenant. It is about Jesus' words confirming the law, the writings and the prophets. It is about bringing God's revelation to its intended full meaning — "fulfilling" it. It is about Jesus approving and appointing Apostles through whom God would speak and further spread His ideas of salvation and the kingdom. Those Apostles suffered and died for the Word, the Gospel about the Kingdom, and all that had been written before them. Is it conceivable that Stephen would be martyred (Acts 7) after laying out the history of Israel to the Jews if he really believed that some of those very events that he described were only fables? And where did Stephen get his information? Was it not from the scrolls read every Sabbath in the synagogues, the very same scrolls that our Lord Jesus read from and believed? Is there ever any indication that Jesus didn't believe the narratives that were read to him and from which he learned? If there is I have never read about it.

Now if Jesus believed the Scriptures and the Apostles believed the Scriptures, then how can one claim to believe in Jesus and deny what Jesus and his chosen agents believed? Let's take a look at some of the confirming Scriptures that unequivocally show that Jesus believed all of the Old Testament from Genesis to Malachi (or the same books in the order in which Jesus knew them, from Genesis to 2 Chronicles).

Let's see where Jesus and the Apostles make solid reference to the miracles of Genesis-Deuteronomy and also to the canon of the Hebrew Bible. Jesus wondered

if he would find faith when he returned. Faith is believing (as “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him as righteousness”). The world’s constant tendency is to find ways *not* to believe. But as Christians we must always be seeking ways to support our belief. If that is not the case then why bother with faith at all? If you seek to undermine the very documents which promise life everlasting then you have come to the purest definition of confusion. The following is a list of confirming Scriptures. It is by no means exhaustive but it does cover the spectrum and lends support to scriptural continuity and the Bible’s unified message.

Jesus

Matthew 1:1-17. This is the genealogy of Jesus linking his identity and “genesis,” or beginning, with 42 generations going back to **Abraham through David**. Luke 3:23-38 takes Jesus’ lineage back to Adam. There is no indication that Jesus repudiated these genealogies. To the contrary, he acknowledged the connection to **Noah, Methuselah and Jacob**.

Matthew 2:5-13. The fulfillment of the ancient Micah 5:2 prophecy concerning Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem creating the link to the minor prophets and their references to the cataclysms chronicled in the Torah.

Matthew 4:1-10. Jesus quotes **Deuteronomy and Psalms** in answering Satan during his temptation in the wilderness.

Matthew 5:17. Jesus says, “Think not that I have come to destroy the **law [Pentateuch]** and the **prophets** [Isaiah-Malachi, including also Joshua-2 Kings, known as the former prophets], but to uphold and fulfill them.” Jesus believed in these Scriptures and what they revealed about the past and the future. He did not single out certain “uncomfortable” historical or eschatological events and comment on their authenticity. Whether it was the creation story or Sodom and Gomorrah or the Flood, he, by his direct support and lack of criticism, confirmed his belief in those events. He could do nothing less since he was the final “Word” or expression of God and his purpose for being was to uphold the word and spread the message of God’s Kingdom.

Matthew 10:15. **Sodom and Gomorrah** are mentioned by Jesus as standing a better chance of vindication in the Judgment than some of those towns which were exposed to the preaching of Jesus or his Apostles.

Matthew 19:4-8. Jesus refers to the **Creation** when God, the Father, made mankind as male and female. Jesus did not redact the creation narrative. He believed the Scriptures as read every Sabbath in the synagogues.

Matthew 12:38-41. Jesus refers to **Jonah** being three days and nights in the belly of a whale.

Matthew 24:37-39. Jesus likens the end of this present age to the days prior to the **Flood and Noah**

entering the ark. Once again there was no editing on the part of Jesus. He took the flood to be a historical event.

Matthew 24:15. Jesus links Daniel’s end-time prophecy of the “abomination of desolation” with a sign of his future coming and the end of the age.

John 10:34-36. In answering the Jews, Jesus comments on the word of God that had been given to them and adds that “**Scripture cannot be broken.**” How many times did Jesus chastise the Jews for not knowing the very Scriptures that they knew came from God (YHWH)? Jesus never corrected the word; he upheld it and indicted the Jews for their hardened hearts and unbelief.

Apostles: Carrying on the Gospel Message of Jesus

Acts 24:14. The apostle Paul in his response to accusations brought against him before Felix said, “According to the Way, which they [the Jews] call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything written in the **Law [Pentateuch] and the Prophets.**” There was no hesitation here. Paul was dogmatic about his belief and appealed to the scriptural source of his faith. “The law and the prophets and writings” (Luke 24:44) were contained within the two bookends of the Hebrew Bible. The writings included some historical books as well as Psalms and Proverbs and Daniel.

Romans 1:18-20. Paul refers to the **creation**, not in a poetic metaphorical sense, but in a real and historical sense. I don’t think that Paul would have been swayed in his thinking by the theory of evolution. Interestingly enough, the Greeks were the first to propose and teach a form of evolution. Darwin just brought it forward in time. Paul was undoubtedly familiar with Greek teaching since it shaped the prevailing world view of the time throughout the Roman Empire.

Romans 5:14. “Death reigned from Adam to Moses.” Paul knew and believed that God created Adam as the first man (not as an evolving organism), and he gave no indication that pagan Greek thinking had clouded his understanding of the plain sense of the Scriptures.

1 Corinthians 10:1-4. Paul rehearses the **Exodus** and Israel passing through the **Red Sea** and compares it to baptism. He saw the “rock” as a type or pattern pointing forward to the coming Messiah. Paul did not believe that the Son of God was alive before he was born!

2 Corinthians 11:3. Paul compares going astray from the simplicity of Jesus to the episode when the **Serpent deceived Eve**. Paul did not feel it necessary to challenge the creation account.

Hebrews 1-4. Paul describes how mankind fits into the **creation plan** and compares man to the angels’ position in the past and future.

1 Peter 3:20. Peter lends his considerable weight, having walked and talked with Jesus for many years, to

the **Noachian Flood** narrative. Once again, there is no problem with Peter's belief and understanding. He took the Hebrew Bible literally as a historical narrative.

2 Peter 2:6-8. Peter recounts the history of the ancient world and how God spared righteous Lot from the cataclysm that befell **Sodom and Gomorrah**.

Finally, the book of Revelation is replete with references to the Hebrew Bible. There are some 450 allusions to it. This is the revelation of God which He gave to Jesus to pass on to the churches. We have come full circle from Genesis to Revelation and the continuity of the Scriptures is confirmed. No Apostle broke ranks and challenged the revealed knowledge coming from God the Father and His Messiah Jesus who is God's final messenger, Son of God and of David and the promised prophet (Deut. 18:15-18; Acts 3:22; 7:37). No Apostle ever intimated that he did not believe the holy Scriptures or that his Lord Messiah (Luke 2:11) was in any way mistaken.

Jesus upheld the authority of canon and Scripture in every instance and passed that faith along to the Apostles. If we are truly to claim the designation "Christian" then how can we deny these unbreakable links to the past? To say "I believe in Jesus" and yet reject the very Scriptures he confirmed is beyond understanding. Jesus was the Word incarnate. He could not have denied or challenged the revealed Scriptures any more than he could have denied God. It wasn't Jesus' responsibility to edit the Scriptures but it was his responsibility to uphold them.

I believe I can safely say that anyone who denies the narratives of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament: Law, prophets and writings, Luke 24:44) and the Greek New Testament Scriptures is at odds with Jesus and God. Jesus bridges the Old and New Testaments with one foot in Genesis and one foot in Revelation. And he is telling the world and Satan, "This is my domain. Stay out of the way."

God, the Father revealed His word to the fathers and prophets who wrote and preserved the sacred Hebrew Scriptures (Luke 24:44). Only after that Old Testament time did God speak through His Son, Jesus, the word, a supernaturally begotten human being (Heb. 1:1-2; Luke 1:35). Jesus fully confirmed those Scriptures, introduced the New Covenant, affirmed not the Law of Moses but "grace and truth" (John 1:14, 17). Having completed his work Jesus now sits at the right hand of God ("my lord" in Ps. 110:1), as High Priest, awaiting the green light to return to earth and set the record straight once and for all to an unbelieving and rebellious world. The Greek New Testament Scriptures record God's final word to us in His Son, the son of David. ✧

When Did God's Son Come into Existence? Part 1

by Ray Faircloth

Please consider the following key facts concerning Jesus in relation to literal pre-existence:

1. Relatively few Scriptures *seem to* indicate any **literal** pre-existence of Jesus.
2. The Son came into existence at his begetting in Mary's womb.
3. The Hebrew Scriptures portray the Messiah as one who was yet to exist, i.e. he was not yet in existence in Old Testament times.
4. The Sonship of Jesus was prophesied in the Old Testament and was therefore future.
5. The Son was exalted to pre-eminence only after his resurrection.
6. The Son did not speak prior to his recorded life.
7. No biblical text says that the Son goes **back** to the Father.

1. Relatively few Scriptures seem to indicate any pre-existence of Jesus. The vast majority of the Scriptures provide no support at all for a doctrine of "pre-existence." For instance, from the entire Hebrew Bible only Genesis 1:26, Proverbs 8:22, 30 and Micah 5:2 have been advanced in any attempt at such proof.

In the Greek New Testament Scriptures there is no hint of pre-existence in Matthew, Mark, Luke, Acts, Romans, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2 and 3 John or Jude.

Three-quarters of the books of the New Testament contain not the slightest indication that Jesus existed as the Son of God *before his birth*.

The Christian Scripture Sources for Pre-Existence

The primary book used for "proof" of pre-existence is the gospel of John. Additionally, Philippians 2:6-8, Colossians 1:15-17, Hebrews 1:10-12, 1 Corinthians 8:6, and Revelation 3:14 are viewed as evidence for the literal "pre-human existence" of Jesus. However, two important questions must be asked: 1) Are these "pre-existence" statements literal or *notional*? By *notional* preexistence we mean that God predicted and *promised* the coming of the Messiah and that the Messiah was always in God's mind. 2) Have the texts which are supposed to teach *literal* preexistence been correctly analyzed and translated?

The Synoptic Gospels and Acts Make No Mention of Pre-Human Existence

Luke 1:3-4: "I resolved also, because I have traced **all things from the start** *with accuracy*, to write them in logical order to you, most excellent Theophilus, that

you may **know fully** the certainty of the things that you have been taught orally.”

In spite of Luke’s tracing “all things from the start with accuracy,” he makes no mention throughout his gospel of Jesus having existed in another form prior to his birth. If such an idea were true, then from his own words, Luke could not possibly have left out this vital information for Theophilus to *know fully*. Luke firmly and plainly places the coming into existence of the Son of God at the time of his conception in Mary’s womb, as we shall see in the next section. What Luke describes is not a transformation of an existing person into *subsequent* human existence. Luke knows nothing of a Jesus who had previously existed as a spirit. He records his one and only coming into actual existence as Son, born of Mary.

Acts 1:1: “The first account, O Theophilus, I composed about all things Jesus started **to do and to teach**.” Luke’s reference back to his first account, which included the statements concerning the coming into existence of the Son of God (1:35), shows that the person Jesus **did and said nothing** prior to his birth. This fact is also expressed in Hebrews 1:2, a verse which shows that Jesus could not have had a pre-human existence.

The gospel of **Matthew** similarly gives no hint of a pre-human existence for Jesus. It too explains Jesus’ conception as his time of coming into existence, i.e. his begetting.

The gospel of **Mark** does not deal with the conception and birth of Jesus at all, but begins with the events concerning the baptism of Jesus. A thorough examination of this entire gospel reveals no hint of a pre-human existence for Jesus.

The same applies to the entire book of **Acts**, Luke’s second volume. Here we must ask: Why did the only official New Testament meeting of the body of Christians, namely the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15, discuss the major issue of whether or not Gentile Christians should keep the Mosaic Law, and yet make no mention of what would be a revolutionary revelation — that the Messiah had previously been an archangel in heaven?

Confirmation from Leading Scholars

Raymond Brown was America’s leading Catholic biblical theologian. In his *Birth of the Messiah* he stated that Matthew and Luke “show no knowledge of Jesus’ pre-existence; seemingly for them the **conception** was the becoming (begetting) of God’s Son” (p. 31).

Distinguished Greek scholar F.C. Baur says: “The idea of pre-existence lies completely **outside the Synoptic** [Matthew, Mark and Luke] **sphere** of view.”¹

¹ *Church History of the First Three Centuries*, p. 65.

Professor William Sanday of Oxford noted that “there is not a single reference in the Synoptic Gospels to Jesus having been the Son of God before his birth.”²

2. The Son of God came into existence at his begetting in Mary’s womb. Sonship begins no earlier than his conception. Protestant theologian Wolfhart Pannenberg states: “In Luke the divine **Sonship is established by** the almighty activity of the divine **spirit upon Mary**...In Luke 1:35 Jesus’ divine Sonship is explicitly established by his miraculous birth...Jesus’ **virgin birth** stands in an irreconcilable contradiction to the Christology of the incarnation of the pre-existent Son of God.”³

Luke 1:35: “For that reason [the creative miracle in Mary] what is born will be called holy, God’s Son.” The Greek *dio kai* means “**precisely for that reason.**” Holy spirit at Jesus’ conception was **the cause** of his becoming God’s Son. Therefore Jesus was never God’s Son at any time prior to his birth. Thus no *only-begotten Son* existed before this point in time. You cannot *come* into existence if you are already in existence!

Luke 1:32: “This one...will be called Son of the Most High.” Matthew 5:9 and Luke 6:35 demonstrate that “**will be called sons of God**” means exactly the same as “**will be sons of the Most High.**” In Luke 6:35 Christians “will be sons of the Most High” and yet they did not pre-exist.

The Origin of Jesus

A person is what he is according to his origin. In his detailed birth narrative Matthew uses the word *genesis* in 1:18. This word means *beginning, origin or birth*. In Bauer’s Greek/English Lexicon *genesis* is defined as: “One’s coming **into being** at a specific moment, birth.” Also “state of being, existence” and “of ancestry as point of origin.” **Matthew 1:18: “The origin [Greek *genesis*] of Jesus Christ was like this...”**

The next thing stated is that “Mary...was found to be pregnant by holy spirit.” So the word *genesis*, as used here, has less to do with the actual birth than with the conception which was Jesus’ point of coming into existence — his “beginning.” Associate Professor of Religious Studies Dr. Bart Ehrman states that “the earliest and best manuscripts agree in introducing the passage with the words: ‘The **beginning** of Jesus Christ happened this way.’”⁴

This text alone demonstrates that Jesus was not in existence at any time prior to his conception. At no time do either of the Matthew or Luke accounts indicate that Jesus was only coming into existence *as a human*, as

² *Hastings Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. 4, p. 576.

³ *Jesus – God and Man*, pp. 120, 143.

⁴ *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture*, p. 75.

though he was first alive and then merely passed *through* Mary rather than originating in her as Matthew 1:20 states.

Messiah's Origin as "Ancestry"

The word *genesis* meaning "origin" is used also in Matthew 1:1. This verse is translated by Darby as: The "Book of the generation of Jesus Christ." The reference is to Jesus' ancestry — his **origin**, because of his line of descent from Abraham through David. Yet logically Jesus only comes into actual existence at the end of that line — his conception.

Micah 5:2: "And you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, the one too little to get to be among the thousands of **Judah**, from you there will come out to me the one who is to become **ruler in Israel**, whose **origin** [*goings forth*] is from early times, from the **days of time indefinite**." Or from *ancient days* (see Hebrew interlinear, NAB, ESV, NRSV, ROTH, REB, and NIV).

Firstly it must be noted that we find in Micah 7:20 a similar phrase used to point back only as far as the Hebrew forefathers, not to a time beyond the world's creation. Micah 7:20: "The loving-kindness given to *Abraham*, which you swore to our *forefathers* from **days of long ago**."

Also Amos 9:11: "In that day I shall raise up the booth of *David* that is fallen...I shall build it up as in the **days of long ago**."

The New American Bible study notes explain Micah 5:2 as a reference to the Messiah's descent from the ancient Davidic dynasty: "The tiny city and clan of Bethlehem-Ephrathah, from which comes the ancient Davidic dynasty (whose *origin* is from old, from ancient times) with its messianic king, one who is to be ruler in Israel." Additionally, the *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges* says that "origins" in Micah 5:2 refers to the Messiah's descent from the ancient Davidic family.

So "origin" in Micah 5:2 refers to Jesus' line of descent which would include the prophecies concerning Messiah as coming through the tribe of Judah (Gen. 49:10) and his being an Israelite (Num. 24:17-19) and a male heir to David and at the same time God's Son (2 Sam. 7:14).

One Cannot Have Two Points of Origin

If *origin* in Micah 5:2 referred to a pre-Bethlehem, real existence of the Son, it would be in contradiction to Matthew 1:18 and Luke 1:32, 35 which give details of the *origin* of Jesus as his *begetting by holy spirit* to become God's Son, i.e. his conception in Mary.

Referring to Micah 5:2, James Dunn, professor of divinity at Durham University, comments that the Hebrew does not suggest pre-existence. Cross-referencing shows that it likely was Micah 5:2 that the first-century Jews had in mind, when they said in John

7:42: "Has not scripture said that the Christ is coming **from the offspring of David**, and **from Bethlehem** the village where David used to be?"

Therefore the Messiah, as the final descendant of the Davidic dynasty, is part of a dynasty that is ancient. In context it would be incorrect to assume that this meant that the Messiah existed before the world's creation. An essentially non-human or pre-human Jesus is not the Messiah of the New Testament but alien to its pages.

Similarly, in trying to assess who Jesus is in John 7:40-41: "Some of the crowd...began *saying*: 'This is for certainty **the prophet**.' Others were saying: 'This is **the Christ**.'"

And when asked by Jesus in Matthew 16:13-14, "'Who are men saying the Son of Man is?' They [the disciples] said: 'Some say **John the Baptist**, others **Elijah**, still others **Jeremiah** or one of **the prophets**.'"

John 1:49 gives Nathaniel's recognition of Jesus as: "Rabbi, you are the **Son of God**, you are **king of Israel**." In no case does anyone suggest that Jesus was a pre-existent spirit.

The Son Was Begotten Once

Matthew 1:20: "That which was **begotten** [generated] in her." *Gennaō* = to beget. The dictionary definition of beget is to originate, to cause to exist. James Dunn comments in *Christology in the Making*:

"**Begetting**...the **coming into existence** of one who will be called, and **will in fact be the Son of God**, not the transition of a pre-existent being to become the soul of a human baby or the metamorphosis of a divine being into a human fetus" (p. 51).

Every single individual described in the Scriptures as having been literally begotten came into existence *only at the time of his/her conception*. It is incorrect to say that it was only as a human that Jesus was begotten at his conception. It is the person — the individual — who first came into existence at that time. It is illogical to propose that anyone could be begotten twice! Christians are "born again," that is, **spiritually begotten**:

1 John 5:18: "Everyone *having been begotten* of God sins not, but the **one begotten** of God keeps him" (Marshall's Interlinear).

"Anyone born of God does not practice committing sin, but **the One who was begotten of God** carefully watches over and protects him" (Amplified Bible. See also NAB, Darby, and Young).

The phrase "**having been begotten**" is in the *perfect tense* in the Greek text, indicating an ongoing condition in the case of Christians, i.e. spiritual begetting. However, the phrase "**the One who was begotten**" with reference to Jesus, is in the *aorist tense* in the Greek and refers to a once only and never to be repeated event of

the past — a physical begetting. Hence the begetting of Jesus occurred according to Matthew 1:20 and Luke 1:35 only on the one occasion when he was supernaturally conceived/begotten in Mary's womb.

The terms “only-begotten of a Father,” “only begotten Son,” and “only begotten Son of God” occur in John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18 and 1 John 4:9. They all refer to Jesus' uniqueness as a son and in particular the uniqueness of his virginal begetting in Mary and in having no human father. This means that Jesus, although fully human, is never to be viewed as a “mere man” — he is a uniquely generated human person.

Because “begotten” means “brought into existence,” the idea of a transformation from one life form to another is logically excluded.

No Existence Prior to Birth According to Paul

The apostle Paul expresses Jesus' coming into existence in the same terms as Matthew and Luke:

Galatians 4:4: “When the full limit of the time arrived, God sent forth *his Son*, who **came to be** [*genomenon*] out of [*from*] a woman.”

The Greek word *genomenon* is from the verb **ginomai = to come into existence**. This excludes the idea of one who came *through* Mary as would be the case with someone who had a pre-human existence.

Ginomai is defined as:

1) to come into being through process of birth (Gal. 4:4). (*Bauer's Lexicon*).

2) to come into existence (*Bauer's Lexicon*).

To become, i.e. to come into existence, begin to be, receive being (*Thayer's Lexicon*).

If there was a pre-existence, then terms such as incarnation or transmigration or transformation would be appropriate. But in the case of the Son of God, the Bible describes the beginning of a new person, exactly as prophesied in Psalm 2:7 and 2 Samuel 7:14.

Prophecy of Future Begetting

Psalm 2:7: “You are my Son, **today** I have begotten you” (NASB).

According to Hebrews 1:5 and Acts 13:33 this was fulfilled when Jesus was born. However, there is a translation issue with Acts 13:33. The phrase “raised up” was mistranslated in the KJV and later in the NWT as “raised up again,” or “resurrected.” The literal translations and the NKJV and NIV have corrected this. F.F Bruce states with reference to Acts 13:33:

“The promise of v. 23, the fulfillment of which is described in v. 33, has to do with the sending of the Messiah, **not his resurrection** (for which see v. 34). Verse 34 reads in the original, ‘from the dead.’”

So we are obliged to differentiate the word *raise up* in verse 33 from *raise from the dead* in verse 34.

Jesus' Genealogy

In the gospel of Matthew the genealogy of Jesus runs back through David to Abraham. The genealogical record given by Luke takes things even further back to Adam (Luke 3:38). Both Matthew and Luke had ample opportunity for mentioning, if they had believed in preexistence, a pre-human Son, but no such thing is described in their detailed accounts. Closely linked with Matthew's genealogical list is the statement that Jesus came into existence in Mary's womb (Matt. 1:20). The time and the location of the origin of the Son of God are made transparently clear. Luke also tells us that the Son of God came into existence in his mother's womb (Luke 1:32, 35). Throughout the synoptic gospels Jesus is called “son of David.” **He is never called or linked with Michael or any other spirit being.** An angelic identity for the Son of God is plainly excluded.

If Jesus had really pre-existed *as Michael* he could not by definition have been the lineal and biological descendant of David. To speak of a pre-human existence contradicts the Scriptures which show Jesus as coming into existence only at his conception in Mary. One cannot exist before one exists. Such an idea is illogical.

John warned believers to accept only a “coming as human” Jesus, i.e. the human historical Messiah. Other Jesuses were to be avoided as dangerous counterfeits. “By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses Jesus Christ having come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess [that] Jesus is not from God” (1John 4:2-3).

3. The Hebrew Scriptures portray the Messiah as one who was yet to exist. Did any of the Hebrew Scriptures direct Jews of the first century to expect a Messiah who had to give up conscious life as an Archangel or heavenly being? Please note the following Messianic prophecies.

Numbers 24:14-17: “Let me advise you what this people will do to your people afterward **in the end of the days**...The utterance of the one hearing the sayings of God...‘I shall see him [Messiah], but not now; I shall behold him but not near, A star will step forth **out of Jacob**, And a scepter will indeed arise **out of Israel**.’”

Deuteronomy 18:18: “I will raise up a prophet **from among** their brothers like you [Moses].” This was fulfilled in Acts 3:22, 7:37 and John 6:14.

Genesis 3:15: “Enmity...between your [the serpent's] seed and her [the woman's] seed” (“who is Christ,” Gal. 3:16).

In none of these prophecies is there a hint of origination from angelic stock. But rather this ultimate prophet would originate from human stock.

2 Samuel 7:14-16: “Your [David's] seed...will establish his kingdom to time indefinite. **I shall become his father**, he will become my *son*.” This is quoted in

Hebrews 1:5. And 2 Samuel 7:19 says it is “down to a distant *future* time.”

Revelation 22:16: Jesus defines his identity: “I am the shoot and descendant of David and the bright star of the morning.”

Just as the fully human Moses had not pre-existed, so too, the Messiah would be a person who was fully human and one promised to be God’s and David’s son at a future time. He was the seed of human persons — “the woman,” Abraham and David. The overshadowing of Mary by holy spirit did not alter his identity as a human being. God’s son Adam was fully human too (Luke 3:38).

Psalms 22:10: “From the belly of my mother you have been my God.” This Psalm is a prophecy of the Messiah as proved by its quotations in the gospels. So this verse strongly indicates that Messiah had God as his God and Father only from his birth. He could therefore not have been *the only-begotten Son* before that time. (*to be cont.*)✧

Comments

“I am fully convinced now of the truth of the unitarian view of God and my study on this in the Holy Scriptures more deeply confirmed than my former Trinitarian belief. I am indebted to your enlightening book *Christianity’s Self-Inflicted Wound*. It has been worn out since you sent it to me because of repeatable study, underlines and footnotes of mine.” — *Philippines*

“I am married to a Oneness Pentecostal and my background was Trinitarian (Southern Baptist mainly). Never having formally studied the doctrine of the Trinity, I set out to disprove the Oneness Pentecostal doctrine that ‘Jesus’ is the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. However the Oneness Pentecostals did raise a few very good questions about the Trinity, so I decided to turn my full attention to that doctrine and the creeds that support it. This was truly a turning point in my life! Like most laypeople in modern religion I accepted the idea of God being Three Persons in One Being as truth. At first the very thought that Jesus was not God (in the way I always assumed him to be) was a very scary thing, and one I instinctively ran from. Of course now looking back I see the very idea of not believing in ‘official church doctrine’ meant that you were a heretic and surely lost. This was instilled in me in the most subtle fashion over my youth in a Baptist church. Even though I could not explain the doctrine at all nor recite any of the creeds I was convinced that it was *the truth* and any deviation from that confession meant certain and final death.

“As God began to open my eyes, principally with the understanding of Acts 2 and also Psalm 110:1, I began to realize that what I had always believed about God was not the truth. So I began to feverishly search

and read God’s word and every opposing view to the doctrine of the Trinity. This is when a new friend of mine I met online named ‘Adampastor’ gave me the link to your site which has proved very valuable to me in the last year or so. He was also the person who first made me look very closely at Psalm 110:1, and since it is the most quoted verse in the entire NT it did not take me long to calm my fears about who Jesus is in relation to the one God of Israel. All of a sudden the Scriptures started to become very clear to me! Moreover the concept of God being three persons suddenly looked not only foolish but absolute *nonsense*. In fact, while I was exploring the doctrine of the hypostatic union, a learned Trinitarian told me in no uncertain terms that ‘God the Son did not die on the cross!’ — *Arkansas*

“I am invited to speak about monotheistic/unitarian faith in a Refreshing Course for Pastors held by quite a well-known university owned by one of the oldest and biggest Episcopal churches in Java Island. The theme of the course is ‘Who do you think I am? Struggling to define the Trinitarian vs. Unitarian discourses within Indonesian churches.’ Mine will be a 30-minute speech followed by an intensive discussion with the audience (about 25 persons). The course is very likely a reaction towards recent theological fuss ignited by our publications. Readers’ responses are various: astonished, curious, angry, convinced, etc. Some months ago, an open-minded editor of a Christian magazine, who had read all our publications, initiated another seminar with the same theme which resulted in a very stunning conclusion. All four speakers (two highly-respected professors, a professional Bible translator, and a pastor) admitted that the Trinity is not Biblical. That surely made the audience, many who are staunch Trinitarians, startled and bewildered.” — *Indonesia*

The Human Jesus two-hour documentary (www.Jesusishuman.com) is available on DVD (\$12). Please call 800-347-4261 or 404-362-0052 to order.

We thoroughly recommend as a learning tool and “tract” for sharing the Kingdom Gospel a short movie entitled “The Kingdom of God.” Dan Cain, a Bible College student, prepared this excellent resource. It is available at our website www.restorationfellowship.org, which has been redesigned and updated.

The **17th Theological Conference** will be Sunday-Wednesday, **April 27-30, 2008** at Simpsonwood Conference Center, which one of this year’s participants called “the most beautiful conference center I’ve ever stayed in”!