

# PREEXISTENCE AND PROPHECIES OF CHRIST

## INTRODUCTION

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- “I believe Christ was a man like ourselves; to look upon him as God would seem to me the greatest of sacrileges.” ~ Leo N. Tolstoy
- The primary issue in false religions is a misunderstanding about the person and work of Christ

No other name has inspired greater devotion, evoked greater reverence, or ignited greater controversy. For 2000 years, the controversy over Christ has continued to rage without let up. Today, everyone has an opinion about Jesus, and these opinions range from the traditional to the novel to the heretical.

Douglas Groothuis, *Jesus in an Age of Controversy*, 7

- The basic question then is: Who is Jesus Christ?

**Matthew 16:15-16** ~ *He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”*

- Reasons it is crucial to understand who Christ is:

### The doctrine of Christ is the foundation for all of Christianity

**1 Corinthians 15:13-14** ~ *But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain.*

### Theology is vitally connected to the person and work of Christ

**Colossians 1:16** ~ *For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.*

### Christ is the center of God’s revelation and program

**Ephesians 1:10** ~ *with a view to an administration suitable to the fulness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon the earth. In Him*

**John 1:1, 14** ~ *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

**Hebrews 1:1-2** ~ *God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.*

## **The focus of the Scriptures is the person and work of Christ**

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**John 5:39, 46** ~ *You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me...For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote of Me.*

**Luke 24:27** ~ *Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.*

## **Christ is the center of the believer's life**

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### ***Everything should revolve around Him***

**Psalm 73:25-26** ~ *Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth. My flesh and my heart may fail, But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.*

**Colossians 3:3** ~ *For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*

### ***We should be coming to know Him more and more***

**Hosea 6:3** ~ *So let us know, let us press on to know the Lord. His going forth is as certain as the dawn; And He will come to us like the rain, Like the spring rain watering the earth."*

**John 17:3** ~ *And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.*

**Philippians 3:10** ~ *that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;*

**2 Peter 3:18** ~ *but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.*

### ***We should be living for Him***

**2 Corinthians 5:14-15** ~ *For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf*

**Philippians 1:21** ~ *For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*

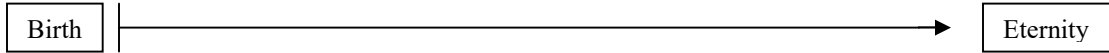
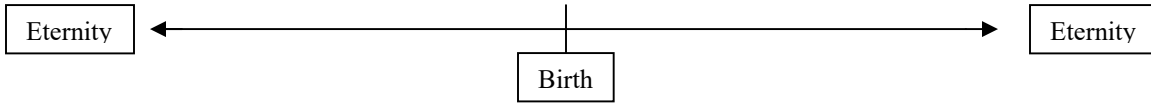
### ***We should be awaiting His return***

**Titus 2:13** ~ *looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus*

## **THE PREINCARNATE EXISTENCE OF CHRIST**

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- We cannot simply begin with Jesus' birth at Bethlehem...His life on earth began there but his existence as a person did not
- He always has been, still is, and ever will be
- A diagrammatic representation:

**Human:****Christ:****The Testimony of the New Testament*****The Son existed before time began***

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

**John 1:30** ~ *This is He on behalf of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'*

**John 8:58** ~ *Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am."*

**John 17:5** ~ *And now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.*

**Colossians 1:17** ~ *He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.*

***The Son became flesh***

**John 1:14** ~ *And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

**Philippians 2:6-7** ~ *who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.*

***The Son was sent into the world***

**John 3:13** ~ *And no one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven, even the Son of Man.*

**John 6:33** ~ *For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world.*

**John 3:17** ~ *For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him.*

**John 7:29** ~ *I know Him; because I am from Him, and He sent Me.*

**John 20:21** ~ *Jesus therefore said to them again, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you."*

**The Testimony of the Old Testament**

- Although the words "Jesus Christ" are not used in the Old Testament, it is important that we identify Christ in the OT because it emphasizes that Christ did not start to begin at the creation or His birth

**Micah 5:2** ~ *But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity.*

## *Appearance as the Angel of the Lord*

To Sarah: **Genesis 16:7, 9, 11** ~ *Now the angel of the Lord found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur... Then the angel of the Lord said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit yourself to her authority." ... The angel of the Lord said to her further, "Behold, you are with child, And you will bear a son; And you shall call his name Ishmael, Because the Lord has given heed to your affliction.*

To Abraham: **Genesis 22:11-12** ~ *But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven, and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." And he said, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."*

- Notice: the angel of the Lord is equated with God

To Moses: **Exodus 3:2-6** ~ *And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush... When the Lord saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush... I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses hid his face for he was afraid to look at God.*

- Notice: Moses worshipped this person

To Balaam: **Numbers 22:22-27** ~ *But God was angry because he was going, and the angel of the Lord took his stand in the way as an adversary against him... When the donkey saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way with his drawn sword in his hand, the donkey turned off from the way and went into the field... Then the angel of the Lord stood in a narrow path of the vineyards... When the donkey saw the angel of the Lord, she pressed herself to the wall... The angel of the Lord went further... When the donkey saw the angel of the Lord, she lay*

To Gideon: **Judges 6:11-12, 22-23** ~ *Then the angel of the Lord came and sat under the oak that was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite as his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the wine press in order to save it from the Midianites. The angel of the Lord appeared to him and said to him, "The Lord is with you, O valiant warrior." ... When Gideon saw that he was the angel of the Lord, he said, "Alas, O Lord God! For now I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face." The Lord said to him, "Peace to you, do not fear; you shall not die."*

- Notice: Gideon equated this person with God

To Manoah: **Judges 13:18, 21-22** ~ *But the angel of the Lord said to him, "Why do you ask my name, seeing it is wonderful?" ... Now the angel of the LORD appeared no more to Manoah or his wife. Then Manoah knew that he was the angel of the LORD. So Manoah said to his wife, "We shall surely die, for we have seen God."*

- Notice: Manoah equated this person with God
- Notice: the name of the angel of the Lord is "Wonderful" (cf. Isaiah 9:6)
- The angel of the Lord was equal with God and equated Himself w/God
- Yet, the angel of the Lord is distinct from God the Father

**Zechariah 1:12** ~ *Then the angel of the LORD answered and said, "O LORD of hosts, how long wilt Thou have no compassion for Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, with which Thou hast been indignant these seventy years?"*

- Only the second person of the Trinity takes bodily form

**John 1:18** ~ *No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.*

- The angel of the Lord does not appear again after the incarnation.
- All post-incarnation references in the NT are to "an angel of the Lord" not "the angel of the Lord"

**Acts 5:19** ~ *But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the gates of the prison, and taking them out he said,*

**Acts 12:7** ~ *And behold, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared and a light shone in the cell; and he struck Peter's side and woke him up, saying, "Get up quickly." And his chains fell off his hands.*

- Conclusion: The Old Testament angel of the Lord was most probably the pre-incarnate Christ

### ***Appearance as a Man***

**Genesis 18:1-2** ~ *Now the Lord appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, while he was sitting at the tent door in the heat of the day. When he lifted up his eyes and looked, behold, three men were standing opposite him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth,*

- Who appeared? → Two angels and a pre-incarnate Christ

**Genesis 32:24, 30** ~ *Then Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. So Jacob named the place Peniel, for he said, "I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been preserved."*

- Who did Jacob see face to face? → A pre-incarnate Christ

**Joshua 5:13-15** ~ *Now it came about when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing opposite him with his sword drawn in his hand, and Joshua went to him and said to him, "Are you for us or for our adversaries?" He said, "No; rather I indeed come now as captain of the host of the Lord." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and bowed down, and said to him, "What has my lord to say to his servant?" The captain of the Lord's host said to Joshua, "Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so.*

- Joshua bowed down and worshipped this man, the captain of the Lord's host, a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ

### ***Appearance to Isaiah***

**Isaiah 6:3** ~ *And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory."*

**John 12:41** ~ *These things Isaiah said, because he saw His glory, and he spoke of Him.*

- Isaiah saw the second person of the Trinity who was clearly God

### ***The Son as Lord***

- Within the mystery of the Trinity, Jehovah and the Messiah are two separate Persons.

**Psalm 2:2** ~ *The kings of the earth take their stand; And the rulers take counsel together Against the LORD and against His Anointed (Messiah)*

**Zechariah 12:10** ~ *And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him, like the bitter weeping over a first-born.*

**Isaiah 40:3** ~ *A voice is calling, "Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God.*

**Matthew 3:3** ~ *For this is the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet, saying, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make ready the way of the Lord, Make His paths straight!'"*

## THE PREINCARNATE MINISTRIES OF CHRIST

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### Creator

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**John 1:3** *All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being*

**Colossians 1:16** ~ *For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created by Him and for Him*

### Guidance

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**Exodus 14:19** ~ *And the angel of God, who had been going before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them.*

**Exodus 23:20** ~ *Behold, I am going to send an angel before you to guard you along the way, and to bring you into the place which I have prepared.*

### Protection

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**Exodus 14:19** ~ *And the angel of God, who had been going before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them.*

**2 Kings 19:35** ~ *Then it happened that night that the angel of the LORD went out, and struck 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians; and when men rose early in the morning, behold, all of them were dead.*

## OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES OF CHRIST

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- From Genesis 3:15 to the end of Malachi, God made many promises which could be realized only through the means of the incarnation.

### Important characteristics of Messianic prophecy

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#### *Figurative Language*

- Figurative language is sometimes used (Isaiah 53 - Lamb of God)

#### *Time Perspective*

- Keep in mind time relations.
- Often the future is regarded as the past because of the certainty of the event, it was written like it had already happened (Hosea 11:1; Isaiah 53:4-5, 7)

#### *Prophetic Perspective*

- Keep in mind multiple events may be envisioned in one prophecy (Joel 2 and Acts 2)
- Example: Range of mountains with a broad valley in between

#### *Dual Fulfillment*

- Keep in mind dual fulfillment (general and specific)

- General - someone could have also fulfilled the prophecy along with Christ (Isaiah 7:14 possibly fulfilled in Isaiah 8:3-4 and Matthew 1:23)
- Specific - only Christ could fulfill the prophecy (Isaiah 53)

## Summary of Messianic Prophecies

Christ's Lineage	Virgin Birth	Genesis 3:15
	Lineage of Shem	Genesis 9:26
	Lineage of Abraham	Genesis 12:2
	Lineage of Isaac	Genesis 17:19
	Lineage of Jacob	Genesis 25:23
	Lineage of Judah	Genesis 49:10
	Lineage of David	2 Sam. 7:12-16
Christ's Birth	Manner of Birth	Isaiah 7:14
	Place of Birth	Micah 5:2
Christ's Life	His forerunner	Isaiah 40:3
	His mission	Isaiah 61:1
	His ministry	Isaiah 53:4
	His teaching	Psalms 78:2
	His presentation	Zech. 9:9
	His rejection	Psalms 118:22
Christ's Death	A painful death	Psalms 22
	A violent death	Isaiah 52-53
Christ's Victory	His resurrection	Psalms 16:10
	His ascension	Psalms 68:18

- It is estimated that there are around 332 prophecies in the OT about Jesus Christ
- And they all pointed to Jesus as the one sent by God to redeem sinners from their sin
- The probability of this is staggering!
- How is it possible that one man would fulfill all 332 prophecies?

A number of years ago, Peter W. Stoner and Robert C. Newman wrote a book entitled *Science Speaks*. The book was based on the science of probability and vouched for by the American Scientific Affiliation. It set out the odds of any one man in all of history fulfilling even only eight of the 332 prophecies fulfilled by the life of Christ.

The probability that Jesus of [Nazareth](#) could have fulfilled even eight such prophecies would be only 1 in  $10^{17}$ . That's 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000.

Stoner claims that that many silver dollars would be enough to cover the face of the entire state of Texas two feet deep. The probability that a blindfolded man would be able, on his very first attempt, to pick up one specifically marked silver dollar is the same probability that Jesus would have fulfilled 8 prophecies

- Of course, there are many more than 8 prophecies
- Peter Stoner also calculated the probability of one person fulfilling 48 prophecies
- Answer: one in 10 to the 157<sup>th</sup> power (10 with 157 zeroes behind it)
- Christ fulfilled not just 8 and not just 48 but 332 prophecies!