

The Pre-Existence of Christ as the Son of YHVH Before Creation

Rick Matthews

Introduction

There has been debate over whether Christ became the Son of YHVH only during the New Testament period or if He was the Son before the world was created. This paper presents scriptural and historical evidence showing that Christ existed as YHVH's Son before the earthly timeframe, being sent to fulfill the plan of salvation established before creation.

1. The Term "Sent" Implies Pre-Existence

Scripture repeatedly states that YHVH "sent" His Son into the world, indicating that He existed before His earthly birth:

- John 3:17 - "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him."
- John 6:38 - "For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of Him who sent me."
- John 8:42 - "I have not come on my own; but He sent me."

The Greek words used for "sent" (*pempo* and *apostellō*) emphasize sending someone who already exists, not creating them at that moment.

2. Proverbs 8:22-30 - Wisdom as a Foreshadow of Christ

Proverbs 8 speaks of Wisdom being brought forth before creation:

- "YHVH possessed me at the beginning of His way, before His works of old... Then I was beside Him, as a master workman."

Early believers saw this passage as symbolically describing the pre-existent Christ, brought forth by YHVH before creation.

3. John 1 - The Word Was With God

- John 1:1-3 - "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a son (or the Son). All things were made through Him."
- John 1:14 - "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us."

While traditional translations read "the Word was God," some alternative renderings better reflect the understanding that Christ was "a son" or "the Son," representing YHVH but distinct from Him.

Note: Some translations and scholars suggest a better rendering of John 1:1c is "the Word was divine" or "the Word was a god" (Emphatic Diaglott, New World Translation), reflecting the Word's divine nature but distinct from YHVH as the one true God.

The Word existed from the beginning and became flesh, showing that Christ was not newly created but entered human form.

4. Christ's Own Words Confirm Pre-Existence

- John 17:5 - "Glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was."

- John 8:58 - "Before Abraham was, I AM."

These statements affirm Christ's conscious existence with YHVH before creation.

5. The Son's Role in Creation

- Colossians 1:15-17 - "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created."

- Hebrews 1:2 - "Through whom also He made the worlds."

Christ, as the Son, is presented as the agent of creation, confirming His existence prior to the world's formation.

6. Psalm 2 and the Declaration of Sonship

- Psalm 2:7 - "You are My Son; today I have begotten You."

This "begetting" is a declaration of position, not a moment of creation. Acts 13:33 connects this to resurrection but reflects an ongoing role.

7. "Son of Man" - Earthly Manifestation of the Pre-Existent Son

- Daniel 7:13 - "One like a Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven, approached the Ancient of Days."

Christ took on flesh to become the Son of Man while already being the Son of YHVH.

8. Foreordained Before the Foundation of the World

- 1 Peter 1:20 - "He was foreordained before the foundation of the world but was manifest in these last times for you."

- Revelation 13:8 - "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

The phrase "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" emphasizes that Christ's role as the sacrificial Lamb was established before creation itself. The Greek wording — ἀρνίου τοῦ ἐσφαγμένου (arniou tou esphagmenou, "the Lamb having been slain") and ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου (apo katabolēs kosmou, "from the foundation of the world") — supports that Christ's sacrificial role was part of YHWH's divine plan from the very beginning.

This does not imply that Christ was physically slain at creation, but rather that He was foreordained as the sacrifice for sin, central to YHWH's plan of salvation from the start. This is reinforced by:

- 1 Peter 1:20 — "He was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you."
- Ephesians 1:4 — "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world..."

This confirms that Christ, as the Son, existed in purpose and identity before the world was made. It reinforces His pre-existence and the certainty of His mission, demonstrating that salvation through the Son was not an afterthought, but part of YHWH's eternal plan.

The plan of salvation existed before creation, proving the Son's role was established from the beginning.

9. The Melchizedek Priesthood - Eternal Nature of the Son

- Hebrews 7:3 - "Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God."

The eternal nature of Melchizedek's priesthood parallels Christ's timeless Sonship.

10. The Angel (Messenger) of YHWH - A Pre-Incarnate Role

Scripture shows the "Angel of YHWH" bearing YHWH's name and authority:

- Exodus 23:20-21 - "My Name is in Him."
- Judges 13:18-22 - "We have seen God!"

Early believers saw this figure as the pre-incarnate Son, distinct yet fully representing YHWH.

11. The Son Given Authority from the Beginning

- John 5:26-27 - "For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself."

This shows the Father-Son relationship was active long before Christ became flesh.

12. The Prophets Knew YHVH Had a Son

- Proverbs 30:4 - "What is His name, and what is His Son's name, if you know?"

This rhetorical question implies ancient understanding that YHVH had a Son.

13. Historical Writings Confirm Early Belief in the Pre-Existent Son

- Justin Martyr (c. 155 AD) - "The first-begotten Word of God is even God."
- Irenaeus (c. 180 AD) - "The Son, eternally co-existing with the Father, always reveals the Father."

These writings show that early believers understood Christ as the eternal Son, not a New Testament-only figure.

14. Conclusion: Christ is Not Co-Eternal or a God Like YHVH

The consistent testimony of Scripture and early historical writings confirms that Christ was YHVH's Son before the earthly timeframe. However, it is equally clear that Christ is not co-eternal with YHVH. The fact that Christ was "brought forth" before creation (Proverbs 8:22-25) means He had a beginning, unlike YHVH, who alone is eternal and uncreated.

Christ is the image of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15), the perfect representative, but not God Himself. Christ openly states in John 17:3, "that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." This distinction is repeated in John 20:17 and Revelation 3:12, where Christ acknowledges YHVH as His God.

YHVH alone declares, "I am YHVH, that is My name; and My glory I will not give to another" (Isaiah 42:8) and "I am YHVH, and there is no other; there is no God besides Me" (Isaiah 45:5).

Christ is the heir of all things (Hebrews 1:2) and the firstborn over creation (Colossians 1:15), not co-creator or co-God. Early Christian writers such as Justin Martyr confirm that the Son was always seen in the second place, subordinate to the one true God, YHVH.

Therefore, Christ is the Son brought forth by YHVH before creation, perfectly reflecting His Father, executing His will, and fulfilling His plan of salvation. Yet, He is not "God" as YHVH is God. YHVH alone is the eternal, uncreated Creator and the one true God.

Authors Note: As we can see from this study, once we have a clear understanding of the relationship between YHVH and His Son, all the pieces of YHVH's plan of Salvation for us, as well as all mankind seem to fit perfectly together.