

CHRIST BEFORE THE MANGER

Lesson 1 w/Answers

Christ Before Creation

For the three Sundays leading up Christmas, I'm going to lead us on a short study looking at Christ before the manger. Ron Rhodes wrote an excellent book years ago entitled "Christ Before the Manger: The Life and Times of the Preincarnate Christ", which I read during my days in seminary, and it really opened my eyes to a much deeper understanding of Christ and of the Trinity.

I suspect today that most of our lost friends and neighbors, and maybe even some of the saved folks we know, believe that Christ came into being at Christmas some two thousand or so years ago. Little do they know that he was probably not physically born during the traditional Christmas season, and he wasn't visited in the manger by three wise men on camels, and in fact he was the creator of the world in which we live today -- long before the manger.

And so I thought that in order to better prepare us to celebrate the true meaning of Christmas, it would be good for us to go back to the beginning -- before Genesis 1:1, to learn more about this mystery called the Trinity, and to better understand how deeply Christ loved us -- before anything was even created.

We will begin our study this week, then, looking into something that may at times appear a little confusing -- something that may startle or surprise you -- but in the end, I believe that will really open your eyes to the importance of understanding the Old Testament, and to seeing Christ as our Creator, our Savior, and as our King.

Since I am going to take the approach of "letting scripture interpret scripture", you won't need any additional books or reference material for this study; however, you will notice that there are a lot more scripture references that I will ask you to look up and jot down notes about.

So put on your Bible study seat belts, thinking caps, and reading glasses, and let's begin!

1. What does Jesus say about himself and the Old Testament (or "the scriptures") in the following verses?
 - a. Matthew 5:17
 - i. ANSWER: His coming fulfilled prophesy, specifically, "the scriptures".
 - b. John 5:39
 - i. ANSWER: The scriptures "testify" about Jesus.
 - c. Luke 24:27
 - i. ANSWER: Jesus took the scriptures, what we refer to as the "Old Testament" and from the beginning of it showed His disciples (who did not yet recognize Him after His resurrection) how it all pointed to Him.
 - d. Luke 24:44
 - i. ANSWER: Contained within all of the parts of the Old Testament -- "The Law", "The Prophets", and "The Psalms" -- are prophesies about Christ. We can learn much about Christ by studying the Old Testament. And Jesus tells us that all of that prophesy in the Old Testament will be fulfilled -- all of it.
 - e. Hebrews 10:7
 - i. ANSWER: Christ came to fulfill God's will, to be our sacrifice, and to pay the price for our sins; and He knew this when He came. (Psalm 40:6-8)

2. Have a look at the following verses. Are there references to Christ in any of them? If so, please cite them.
 - a. Genesis 1:26-27
 - i. ANSWER: Let "us" make man in "our" image refers to the triune God -- the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
 - b. Genesis 3:22
 - i. ANSWER: The man has now become like "one of us", again referring to the Trinity.
 - c. Genesis 11:7
 - i. ANSWER: Again, even at the Tower of Babel, we see Christ. It reads, come, "let us" go down and confuse their language.
 - d. Isaiah 6:8
 - i. ANSWER: This reads "Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying 'Whom shall I send? And who will go down for us?'" Another reference to the Trinity.
3. There are other references to Christ's existence before creation. Look at the verses below and jot down what they say about Christ before the world existed -- and about God's plan of salvation. Did it happen after the Manger, after the Cross, or was it already in place before anything was created?
 - a. Revelation 13:8
 - i. ANSWER: This speaks about the "Lamb" being slain from the creation of the world. In other words, Jesus knew, at the time of the creation of the earth and everything in it, that he would need to be the one who would be sacrificed in order to save the very thing that he was creating.
 - b. Ephesians 1:4-5
 - i. ANSWER: Ephesians tells us that Jesus chose us before he even created the world. Each of us comes into this world with a specific purpose and plan that Jesus designed for us all the way back from before creation began!
 - c. Titus 1:2
 - i. ANSWER: Indeed, our hope and our eternal promise from God came before creation. Jesus is, and has always been, our eternal promise, even before He created anything.
 - d. 2 Timothy 1:9
 - i. ANSWER: Again we see that God's grace was shed on us before creation itself existed. Jesus loved us, even before he created us. Jesus chose us, even before he created us. And Jesus' promise of an eternal life with him existed long before anything was created.
 - e. Matthew 25:34
 - i. ANSWER: We also see that the eternal kingdom we belong to was created by Jesus before our existence.
 - f. John 1:1-14
 - i. ANSWER: Jesus was the creator of all things, both physically and spiritually. Nothing, absolutely nothing, that exists is an accident. Jesus created all of it.
 - g. 1 Peter 1:19-20
 - i. ANSWER: As we have been observed throughout this lesson, many verses clearly point to Jesus being chosen as the Lamb of God before the earth was even created and before the fall of Man occurred in the Garden of Eden.

We'll stop here this week. I hope that you will take the time to diligently look up each set of verses and allow the Holy Spirit to illumine your hearts and minds regarding our great Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ. In the next lesson, we will see that the entire Bible, from Genesis 1:1 through Revelation 22:21, is a revelation of Christ, and his role in creation, salvation, and judgment -- all made plainly clear. He existed with God and the Holy Spirit from before time began, as a part of God's triune being. Through him, all things were created; and he holds all things together.

May God richly bless you this week as we search and study to learn more about our loving Savior and Lord.

In Christ,

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