



# Bible Student's Notebook™

## The Herald of His Grace

Presenting *every man* mature in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

Volume 44  
Issue 1084

# Did Jesus Exist Before He Was Born?

## A Biblical Examination

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by —Clyde Pilkington and Steve Martin

### Key Points:

[Jesus' story begins at conception.....9093](#)  
[Jesus was fully human, gaining divine authority through perfect obedience, not by virtue of inherent divinity.....9095](#)  
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[flesh in Jesus, not a preexistent being becoming human. ....9095](#)  
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[Jesus lived by faith, not foreknowledge, trusting God's promises without relying on divine memory or power. ....9097](#)



### INTRODUCTION

Christianity's traditional view holds that Jesus existed before His birth in Bethlehem – that He lived eternally in Heaven before coming to Earth. But does Scripture actually teach this?

**A closer examination reveals compelling evidence that Jesus' story begins at His conception, and that His divine authority came through His perfect human life and resurrection rather than preexistence.**

### A PASTOR'S JOURNEY TO UNDERSTANDING

As a former Baptist pastor, my deep and methodical study of Scripture led me to radically reevaluate what I had long believed about the nature of Christ.

When I carefully examined I Corinthians 8:6, the text's clear distinction between "one God, the Father" and "one Lord, Jesus Christ" challenged my fundamental assumptions. This wasn't just a casual reference – Paul was making a doctrinal statement about the unique identity of the Father as God, while presenting Christ in a different role as Lord.

This realization became the catalyst for my complete re-examination of Christology.

As my studies continued, I found other passages that reinforced this perspective. Colossians 1:15-18's description of Jesus as "the firstborn from the dead" stood out as particularly significant. The text emphasizes that Christ's preeminence stems from His resurrection victory, not some pre-creation existence. This changes everything about how we understand His authority.

Similarly, Matthew 1:1's unusual Greek phrasing, "the book of the *genesis* of Jesus Christ," struck me as profoundly important. The use of "genesis" here suggests an origin point, a beginning for Jesus that aligns with His human conception, not eternal pre-existence. These weren't obscure proof-texts, but foundational passages that [\(continued on page 9095\)](#)



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### Bible Student's Notebook™

*Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal*

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*Scripture education in a weekly format!*

This free electronic publication is dedicated to:

- the absolute sovereignty and deity of God (Romans 11:36);
- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation that God will save all through the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3-4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the universality of death and resurrection (I Corinthians 15:21);
- the unique gospel of Paul – which he calls "my gospel" (Romans 2:16; 16:25; II Timothy 2:8; I Corinthians 15:1-4; Acts 13-28; Acts 20:24);
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret in ages past" (Romans 16:25);
- the epistles of the present Secret Administration being Ephesians & Colossians (Ephesians 3:2, 9; Colossians 1:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the One Body (Ephesians 4:16);
- the Secret Administration, being the operational revelation for today (Ephesians 3:9);
- the unprophesied, Celestial hope and calling of the One Body (Colossians 3:4);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Ephesians 3:1-3);
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15);
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice,

misunderstanding and fear (Mark 7:7, 13);

- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with:
  - total freedom from sins (Colossians 1:14);
  - union in His death, burial and resurrection and ascended seated position among the celestials (Ephesians 2:6);
  - adult sonship position (Ephesians 1:5).

This publication is the product of humble efforts of saints intended to stimulate the earnest study of Scripture. We do not claim infallibility for the contents of this publication; thus they are not meant to imply finality on any subject discussed, or that further research would not add further light from the Word of God. God's storehouse of truth is inexhaustible, so draw on its wealth by prayerful study. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

This publication is not connected with any "church," "denomination," "movement," "organization," "mission," "creed," "meeting," "school," "conference" or "fellowship."

*We are always open for discussion, but never for disputation. – André Sneidar*

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traditional interpretations had somehow overlooked or explained away.

These discoveries represented not just academic observations, but a complete paradigm shift in understanding Who Jesus truly was according to Scripture.

### THE CASE FOR JESUS' GENUINE HUMANITY

The New Testament consistently presents Jesus as fully and genuinely human, with His divine authority and sonship being established through His life, death and resurrection, rather than stemming from preexistent divinity. Key passages like Romans 1:3-4 show Jesus being “appointed” as Son of God at His resurrection, while Hebrews emphasizes His authentic human experiences – being truly tempted (4:15), learning obedience through suffering (5:8), and offering prayers with tears (5:7).

These descriptions would be meaningless if Jesus had possessed divine omniscience and omnipotence. The biblical portrait instead presents Him as the new Adam – a real human being Who succeeded where the first Adam failed, becoming the “firstborn from the dead” (Colossians 1:18) through His perfect obedience.

This understanding aligns with Israel’s uncompromising monotheism, where Yahweh alone is God (Isaiah 45:5), and the Messiah is consistently portrayed as a human descendant of David (Jeremiah 23:5). Jesus fulfills His messianic role, not as a pre-existent divine being temporarily inhabiting human form, but as the true human representative Who im-

ages God perfectly through obedience. His resurrection and exaltation thus represent the glorification of humanity rather than a return to divinity, making Him both our redeemer and prototype – the “first-fruits” (I Corinthians 15:20) of what God intends for all humanity. This preserves both God’s absolute oneness and the genuine humanity essential for Christ’s representative work.

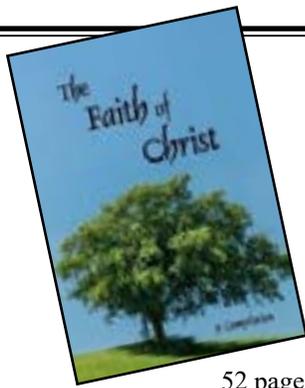
### UNDERSTANDING THE “WORD” (LOGOS)

John’s prologue (John 1:1-18) must be understood within its Hebrew doctrinal context, particularly that which viewed God’s “Wisdom” as both His creative power and self-revelation.

In Proverbs 8, “Wisdom” is personified as being “beside [God] as a master workman” (Proverbs 8:30), participating in creation – yet this personification was always understood as a poetic device, not a separate divine being.

When John declares that “the Word became flesh” (John 1:14), he is employing this same Hebrew conceptual framework. He is not suggesting a pre-existent divine person transformed into a human, but rather that God’s eternal self-expression – His creative Word and Wisdom that was “with God” from the beginning (John 1:1-2) – was ultimately embodied and enacted in the human life of Jesus of Nazareth. The Word “dwelling among us” refers to God’s plan and purpose taking concrete historical form in Jesus’ life, ministry, death and resurrection.

This interpretation aligns perfectly with the rest of John’s Gospel, which presents Jesus as the human



52 pages

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### *The Faith of Christ (A Compilation)*

Here is a subject worthy of our careful consideration. It is crucial to our spiritual well-being, since it is vitally joined to our redemption and deliverance which are to be found in the Lord Jesus Christ. “The faith of Jesus Christ” is unwittingly denied by sincere and well-meaning believers. After having been well-grounded in this subject as it is revealed in His Word and reflected in this study, may we no longer be found in that rapidly growing company of believers who are unenlightened because they are uninstructed. Authors include:

E.H. Clayton (1887-1972), A.E. Knoch (1874-1965), Adlai Loudy (1893-1984), and Frank Neil Pohorlak (1907-1988).

Messiah Who perfectly reveals the Father (John 1:18) through His obedient life, not as a visiting deity. The incarnation is thus God's Wisdom and Word being lived out in human history through Jesus, not the metamorphosis of a preexistent divine being into flesh.

### JESUS AS THE "LAST ADAM"

Paul's comparison between Adam and Christ in Romans 5:12-19 presents Jesus as the true human representative who reverses Adam's failure. For this parallel to hold, Jesus had to be as fully human as Adam – not a divine being temporarily in human form.

Just as Adam's disobedience brought sin and death to all humanity, Christ's perfect obedience brings righteousness and life to all who are in Him. This makes sense only if Jesus faced temptation and death as a genuine human, not as an incarnate deity. If Christ were not truly human, His obedience would not parallel Adam's failure, nor could He function as the "last Adam" (I Corinthians 15:45), the new Head of redeemed humanity.

The implications are profound: Jesus' humanity is essential for redemption. His victory was not a divine performance but a real human life of faithfulness. His resurrection then becomes not just a miracle but the firstfruits of what awaits all humanity (I Corinthians 15:20-23). This undermines the preexistence view, which turns Jesus into a divine visitor rather than the true human representative Who opens the way for all others. Paul's teaching works only if Jesus was one of us – a man Who trusted God perfectly and, in doing

so, made a way for all humanity's restoration.

### THE SOURCE OF JESUS' AUTHORITY

Jesus' divine authority and exalted status were the direct result of His perfect human obedience, sacrificial death, and victorious resurrection. Scripture clearly shows that God the Father exalted Jesus to the highest position of authority as the reward for His faithfulness (Philippians 2:8-9; Acts 5:31). This wasn't a *return* to some preexistent divine state, but rather the unprecedented elevation of a fully human life – the first mortal being to be crowned with immortal glory (Hebrews 2:9).

Through His obedience unto death, Jesus pioneered a new path for all humanity, becoming the "firstborn from the dead" (Colossians 1:18) and receiving "all authority in Heaven and on Earth" (Matthew 28:18) as the perfected human representative before God.

This understanding preserves crucial doctrine while magnifying Christ's accomplishment. It maintains God the Father as sole Creator (Isaiah 44:24) while showing how Jesus, as the faithful human Messiah, was granted divine prerogatives by the Father's decree (Acts 2:36).

The exaltation passages – including His seating at God's right hand (Ephesians 1:20) and receiving the Name above all names (Philippians 2:9) – describe the Father's response to Jesus' perfect human obedience, not the resumption of some preincarnate glory. This makes Jesus' victory more meaningful.

Ultimately, this perspective presents Jesus as both

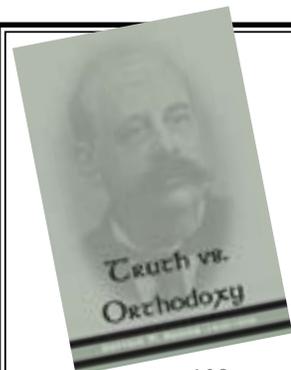
## Truth vs. Orthodoxy

by – Arthur P. Adams

This is a collection of studies from the heartwarming and insightful pen of A.P. Adams (1847-1925). Chapter titles are:

Orthodoxy  
The Spirit of the Word and  
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We See Jesus

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Why Christ Died and Man's  
Doctrine of Substitution  
"Substitution" and the "Vicarious  
Atonement"



108 pages

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our Redeemer and our Prototype – the first glorified human who blazed a trail for all others to follow (Hebrews 12:2). Rather than diminishing Christ, this view magnifies His achievement, and honors His being made both Lord of all and the model for what redeemed humanity will become (Romans 8:29).

## THE FAITH OF CHRIST

One of the most profound truths often overlooked in traditional theology is the vital truth of “*the faith of Christ*.” Contrary to the idea that Jesus relied on divine omniscience or preexistent knowledge, Scripture presents Him as a man Who walked by faith. He didn’t go through life with supernatural foresight or immunity to fear – He read the Scriptures, believed what they said about Him, and trusted His Father completely. This wasn’t fake-faith or staged-obedience. Jesus knew Who He was, not because He had celestial memory, but because He believed God. That trust carried Him through betrayal, suffering, and even death, knowing – by faith – that resurrection would follow.

To say that Christ was the Creator, pretending to be human, strips away the very thing that makes His journey remarkable. If He had come from Heaven, already knowing the outcome, there would be no need for faith – and faith would become meaningless. Embracing the idea of His preexistence destroys this vital truth taught by Paul.<sup>1</sup>

## WHY THIS UNDERSTANDING MATTERS PROFOUNDLY

This perspective on Jesus’ nature and origin isn’t just theological nitpicking – it transforms how we understand salvation, God’s character, and our own human destiny. When we recognize Jesus as beginning His existence at conception rather than eternally preexisting, every aspect of His life takes on deeper significance.

First, it makes Jesus’ sacrifice infinitely more meaningful. Hebrews 5:7-8 reveals that He “*offered up prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears*”

and “*learned obedience through what He suffered*.” This wasn’t a divine being going through the motions, but a real human being wrestling with fear and pain while living radical obedience. His death on the stake becomes the ultimate act of love – a man Who could have turned back but instead trusted God completely.

This understanding preserves the shocking truth of Philippians 2:8 that He “*humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death*.”

Second, it safeguards the Bible’s uncompromising monotheism. Isaiah 45:5 declares, “*I am the Lord, and there is no other; apart from Me there is no God*.” By recognizing Jesus as the human Messiah rather than a preexistent divine being, we maintain the clear distinction between the one Creator God and His chosen representative. As I Corinthians 8:6 maintains, there is “*one God, the Father ... and one Lord, Jesus Christ*” – a distinction that gets blurred in traditional Trinitarian and Preexistence formulations.

Third, it makes Jesus a genuinely relatable High Priest. Hebrews 4:15 emphasizes that He “*has been tempted in every way, just as we are*.” If He were an omnipotent deity merely appearing human, this claim would ring hollow. But if He was truly human – facing limitations, growing in wisdom (Luke 2:52), and developing through experience – then He truly understands our struggles and models what faithful humanity looks like.

Fourth, it reveals the breathtaking destiny of all humanity. Romans 5:12-19’s Adam-Christ parallel shows Jesus as the new Head of the human race – not as a visiting deity, but as one of us Who succeeded where Adam failed. His resurrection and exaltation (Acts 5:31) demonstrate what God intends for all. As I Corinthians 15:22 declares, “*in Christ all will be made alive*.”

Finally, it gives proper glory to God the Father as the sole Creator and Source of all things. Rather than dividing divine attributes between Father and Son, this view maintains Isaiah 44:24’s declaration that God “*alone stretched out the Heavens*.” Jesus’ story becomes the ultimate demonstration of humanity’s ultimate destiny – giving us the confident expecta-

1. For more on this subject, see,

[The Faith of Christ \(A Compilation\)](#), Bible Student’s Press.

(see [PREEXIST](#), last page)

# Animals in God's Story

## Chapter 6: Will My Pet Be in Heaven?

[Click here to listen to this article](#)

by – Steve Martin and Clyde Pilkington

### Key Points:

The ache you feel when your pet dies is sacred..... 9098      and everything in creation..... 9099  
Your pet will experience restoration along with everyone

It's the question that sits quietly in the hearts of so many:

Will I see my pet again?

You've probably asked it in the dark. Maybe through tears. Maybe while holding a leash that no longer has a dog. Or staring at a sunlit spot on the carpet where your cat used to nap.

And maybe you haven't asked it out loud – because someone once told you that it was childish. Sentimental. Not theological enough.

But that ache in your chest? It's not silly. It's sacred.

And you're not alone in feeling it.

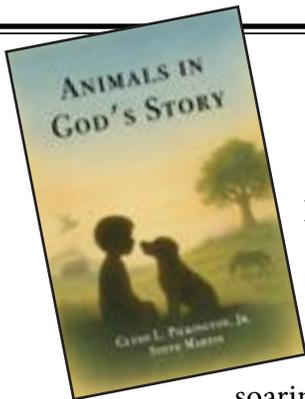
The Bible doesn't have a verse that says, "Your pet is in heaven." But it doesn't say the opposite, either. What it gives us is something far more powerful than platitudes. It gives us a story of hope so wide and so beautiful, it sweeps up *everything* we've ever loved and thought we lost.

Let's start here:

*Through Him [Jesus] to reconcile all things to Himself ... whether things on Earth or things in Heaven (Colossians 1:20).*

All things. Not just people. Not just the spiritual. Not just those who said the right words at the right time.

**All things.**



## Animals in God's Story (Pre-publication notice)

by — Steve Martin & Clyde Pilkington

Have you ever wondered why God made animals? What role do they play in the grand story He's telling? Are they simply background scenery – or is there something more?

*Animals in God's Story* invites you on a journey through Scripture and nature to discover how animals reflect the heart of their Creator. From loyal dogs to soaring doves, from lions in prophetic visions to a donkey that speaks, this book uncovers the often-overlooked ways animals have always been a part of God's redemptive plan.

You'll explore:

- Why animals were created and what they reveal about God's nature.
- How animals are used in Scripture to teach, warn, comfort and guide.
- The significance of animals in the coming restoration of all things.
- What it means that God's care extends beyond people to all creation.

This book is for anyone who's ever felt a deep connection with a pet, marveled at wildlife, or sensed that animals know more than we give them credit for. It's a gentle, grace-filled reminder that animals are not just part of God's world – they're part of His story.

That includes your pet. The one who waited by the door. Who walked with you through hard seasons. Who showed you more about loyalty and presence than some sermons ever could.

Paul says that all creation is groaning – waiting to be set free from the decay it never chose (Romans 8).

That groaning? That's not just earthquakes and extinction. It's the silent whimper of an old dog in pain. It's the last breath of a beloved cat in your arms. It's the ache in your own soul when they're gone.

But here's the good news:

That groaning has an expiration date.

*Jesus will remain in Heaven until the time comes for God to restore **everything**, as He promised long ago through His holy prophets (Acts 3:21).*

### **Restore everything.**

Not just redeem souls. Not just rescue people. Restore – **everything**.

That includes wagging tails and twitching whiskers. It includes the quiet comfort of a warm body curled up beside you, the purr that synced with your heart-beat, the joyful bark that made you feel like the most important person in the world.

This is not a vague, sentimental hope. This is resurrection. This is redemption that reaches to the edges.

Isaiah saw it: wolves and lambs lying down together.

Hosea saw it: a covenant not just with people, but with “*the beasts of the field.*”

Paul saw it: a groaning creation waiting for liberation.

John saw it: a voice from heaven declaring, “*Behold, I am making **ALL THINGS NEW***” (Revelation 21:5).

Everything broken will be mended. Everything lost will be found. Everything groaning will sing.

So – will you see your pet again?

If God gave them to you in this life as a gift of love, comfort and companionship, why would He erase that in the life to come?

Love doesn't end with death. And God's love? It *never* ends.

Your story with your pet isn't over. Not by a long shot.

The world is being remade. And your companion? They'll be there.

Tail wagging. Eyes shining. Whole again.

Not forgotten. Not discarded. Restored.

Just like you. **BSN**

#### **TOPICS:**

**Major:** Animals; God; Love; Pets; Salvation of All

**Minor:** Covenant; Death; Redemption; Restoration; Resurrection



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# The Boss

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poem, by — Jeff Bohlender

Holy Bible in my ears, Day by day for sixty years.

Bad translations, I have found, Make a mess all around.

It's on purpose, I believe, Everything is meant to be. Want to argue? Go ahead. I can't hear it in my head.

PREEXIST (continued from page 9097)

tion that we, too, will be participants in God's all-encompassing redemptive work.

## CONCLUSION

While challenging traditional views, this perspective roots Christology firmly in Scripture's testimony. It presents Jesus as the perfect human Who fulfilled God's plan through faithful obedience, rather than a preexistent deity temporarily visiting Earth. Examining these texts deepens our appreciation for both Jesus' humanity and God's sovereign plan of salvation.

*For even as, through the **disobedience of the one man**, the many were constituted sinners, thus also, through the **obedience of the One**, the many shall be constituted just* (Romans 5:19, CV). **BSN**

### TOPICS:

**Major:** Christ's Faith; Jesus Christ (Pre-Existence of)

**Minor:** Logos; Word

I've been washed. I've been cleaned, Like a squeaky time machine.

How's it happen? Who does that? Wasn't me, that's a fact.

There's a Savior working hard, In His giant wrecking yard.

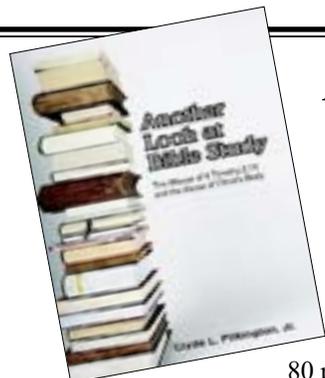
Don't believe it? That's OK. You'll find out some fine day.

He's the Boss, it's not me. I'm a little chickadee.

Chirping, tweeting, making noise, Can't contain my happy voice.

Ages roll, monsters fall, Little folk grow big and tall. Some fine day, all will see, And be pleased along with me. **BSN**

GRACE IS THE  
OUTRAGEOUS, UN-  
STOPPABLE FORCE OF  
GOD'S LOVE THAT FLOODS  
EVERY FAILURE, BREAKS EVERY  
RULE WE THOUGHT HE HAD,  
AND STILL SAYS, "YOU'RE  
MINE" — NO MATTER WHAT.  
— STEVE MARTIN



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*The Misuse of II Timothy 2:15 and the Abuse of Christ's Body*

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

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"What a freeing teaching." – *Pennsylvania*

"Such a balm to my soul." – *Canada*

"Finally relieved me of yet another religious burden." – *Poland*

80 pages

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