

An Introduction To The Pre-existence of the Messiah:

Did you know that some 2000 years ago, the Jewish people of the time generally believed that Moses 'pre-existed' his birth?

In the ancient book known as 'The Testament of Moses' we read: "For this is what the Lord of the world has decreed: He created the world on behalf of his people, but he did not make this purpose of creation known from the beginning of the world so that the nations might be found guilty... But He did design and devise me [Moses], who was prepared from the beginning of the world to be the mediator of the covenant" (Testament of Moses, 1:13, 14).

James C. VanderKam writes that 'The Testament of Moses' "... purpose was to reassure the readers that God foreknew everything that would happen, that he is faithful to the covenant, and that he will have compassion on his people. No less an authority than Moses himself stands behind the message." (An Introduction to Early Judaism, pp. 114-115).

There is much argument over the dating of this book. Partly because it does appear to have been edited and some interpolations added. However, the consensus would seem to be that it was written before the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE.

So the question is, how did the Jewish people, prior to and during the time of Yeshua understand the 'pre-existence' of Moses?

The evidence from their writings is that they believed that Moses 'pre-existed' in the same way that Israel and the Torah itself pre-existed.

For example, the rabbinic understanding of Balaam's vision is that he saw Israel in heaven before the Hebrews had entered the Land of Israel. That is, Israel 'pre-existed' in heaven, because it was already in the 'mind and plans of God'.

Numbers 21: 15 – 19

"15 And he took up his discourse and said, The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor, the oracle of the man whose eye is opened,

*16 the of God, and knows the knowledge of the Most High, oracle of him who hears the words **who sees the vision of the Almighty**, falling down with his eyes uncovered:*

*17 I see him, **but not now**; I behold him, but not near: a star shall come out of Jacob, **and a scepter shall rise out of Israel**; it shall crush the forehead of Moab and break down all the sons of Sheth.*

*18 Edom shall be dispossessed; Seir also, his enemies, shall be dispossessed. **Israel is doing valiantly.***

19 And one from Jacob shall exercise dominion and destroy the survivors of cities!"¹

Here are some brief excerpts from a Jewish site on this topic:

"In rabbinic literature, it was taught that the Torah was one of the six or seven things created prior to the creation of the world. ... Akiva called the Torah "the precious instrument by which the world was created". Rav said that God created the world by looking into the Torah as an architect builds a palace by looking into blueprints...

Judah Halevi (wrote) ... God created the world for the purpose of revealing the Torah; therefore, since, as the philosophers say, "the first of thought is the end of the work," the Torah is said to have existed before the world."- from http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/Judaism/The_Written_Law.html

*"In Pesikta Rabbati 152b is said that 'from the beginning of the creation of the world the King Messiah was born, for he came up **in the thought of God** before the world was created.' This means that from all eternity it was the will of God that the Messiah should come into existence, and should do his work in the world to fulfil God's eternal saving purpose."²*

So from these Scriptures and references we should be able to see that to 'pre-exist' was not to be alive or existing in some alternative state of being, but to simply be part of the plans of God. In this way it is quite clear and rational to appreciate that Moses, Israel, the Torah and the Messiah could all 'pre-exist', in the sense that they were all in the mind of God,

¹ When the Almighty speaks, that is when He gives His word, it is certain that what He speaks will come to pass at some

² H. Mowinckel, 'He That Cometh' (Nashville: Abingdon, 1954) page 334

before He created the Universe and time and space. In fact, it is ONLY in this way that we can make any sense at all of physical objects existing before the existence of physical space!

Thus, if there is any other form of 'pre-existence' before the creation of the Universe, the thing said to 'pre-exist' must of necessity be spiritual, not physical. We understand from many texts in the Tanakh, such as Genesis 1:16 that there are 'spiritual beings' (the host of Heaven), created by the Almighty, that existed before the creation of the Universe.

These 'spiritual beings' (angels or 'messengers of God') though did NOT pre-exist. We are told they existed then and they exist now, that is they have continued to exist, so that we can not speak of their pre-existence.

Thus, it should be clear that physical objects cannot pre-exist, and 'spiritual beings' continue to exist and therefore do not 'pre-exist' either.³

As Sir Anthony Buzzard has so eloquently and forcefully elucidated in his book '*Jesus was Not a Trinitarian*', pre-existence is a nonsensical term. Just as Trinitarians try to redefine the meanings of words such as father and son, they also have introduced this concept of existing before you existed!

The incorrect use of words (semantics) is very powerful. It is perhaps no more obvious than in the Pro-life debate where terms like 'termination of pregnancy' and 'euthanasia' (meaning a painless or good death) are used for the killing of innocent human beings.

The pre-existence of Yeshua (whether as God or an angel) denies the humanity of Yeshua. If Yeshua was not truly a man, then no one can have any assurance that, as a man or woman we can be resurrected into life eternal.

Let us now consider a few NT verses:

Gal 3:19

"Why the Torah then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made."

Yeshua is the 'seed' of Abraham (Gen 22:10); of Judah (Gen 49:10); of David (2 Sam 67:12 & Isa 11:1). Thus he was not before these patriarchs but was born from their line.

Gen 3:15

"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel."

This may well be the first prophecy of the coming of an eschatological Anointed One (the Messiah) – it tells us that he is a descendant of a woman. That is he is not BEFORE the woman or any woman.

Yeshua is described as "first-born" meaning he is pre-eminent, not first created – he is not an angel – angels are never spoken of as being born. Yeshua is the first human being (Son of Man⁴) to be resurrected and given an immortal body; thus he is the first born of the new creation – His actions have guaranteed that the New Creation will one day come into being (the coming Kingdom of God and the new Heavens and new Earth).

The Book of Hebrews also tells us the in days of old, God spoke through the prophets, but that now (since the birth and entrance into ministry of Yeshua) God speaks through His Son (Hebrews 1:1-2)⁵.

If Yeshua had pre-existed and hence lived during the times of Abraham through Moses and King David, then surely this statement would not be true as God would have spoken through the pre-existent Yeshua.

In Deuteronomy 18 we read: *"I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him."*

There is a very clear implication here that God has not, at this point in time, at Mt Sinai, 'raised up' (brought into being –

³ There may be one other perspective though, in which a 'thing' or being can be said to pre-exist. If we could show that it existed as a 'spiritual being' prior to Creation and then at some later time, changed from being a 'spiritual being' to being a physical being or human being.

⁴ Prof. David Flusser ('Jesus') shows conclusively that the term 'son of man' was simply a Hebraic term meaning a human being, though it could in places be used to refer to a very special human being.

⁵ *"Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world."* – Hebrews 1:1-2

created or generated or birthed), the Messiah. So the Messiah, the Son, could not have spoken to the Israelites in 'days of old', simply because he did not exist yet.

God 'sent' i.e. commissioned Yeshua to perform a special task for God. The Bible also talks of John the Baptist being 'sent' (Jn 1:6) *There came a man sent from God, whose name was John.* and that believers are 'sent', etc.

God call Yeshua to 'come forth into the world' – this also means to appear in public with a mission.

James 1:17 "Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, **coming down** from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow. "

'Every good gift comes down from above' – does this mean all our gifts were once in heaven? And therefore they all pre-existed. Did the Holy City exist in heaven? Yes, in the same sense that Israel and Moses and the Torah all 'pre-existed' in heaven; they all existed in the 'mind of God'.

Rev 21:2 "And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband." – The Holy City 'comes down from heaven'

Nicodemous thought Yeshua a teacher 'come; from God – that is, he thought God had commissioned him - John 3:2 this man came to Yeshua by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that **you do unless God is with him.**"

Yeshua was 'from God' or 'of God' but so are all disciples - John 8:47 "He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God."

Mark 1:38 "He said to them, "Let us go somewhere else to the towns nearby, so that I may preach there also; for that is what I came for."

Luke 4:43 "But He said to them, "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose."

These passages which describe the mission statement of Yeshua show that 'come for'; came forth', 'sent' just been being commissioned – given this task by God.

Yeshua made an analogy of himself (John 6:33,38,50,51,58) with the manna (Ex 16:4,15; Num 11:9)

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

38"*For I have **come down from heaven**, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.*

48 *I am the bread of life.*

50"*This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die.*

51" *I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh."*

58"*This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live forever."*

The manna did not literally pass through the skies – it appeared miraculously on the ground in the desert. In the same way, the Messiah 'comes down from heaven' because he is a gift from God, a specially anointed Jewish son who was able to live a sinless life; to pay the ultimate price for his friends and then be rewarded by his Father and resurrected to life eternal.

John 1:9 "There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man."

All humans 'come into the world' – this means to be born. The Apostle Paul tells us in Gal 4:4 "But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law," & Rom 1:3 "... concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh," that Yeshua 'come into existence' from a woman and from the seed of David.

The Gospel of John (but not the Matthew, Mark or Luke or the Acts & Peters epistles) has the peculiar Hebrew concept of fore-ordination. This concept does not mean pre-existence, except in the mind of God (see Rev 13:8 "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." KJV).

John 13:3 “Yeshua knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God”

John 16:28 “I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.”

John 20:17 “Yeshua saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.”

These passages are mistranslated in NIV & NASB as ‘back’ to the Father.

The numerous scriptures that speak of the Almighty’s ‘right hand’ or ‘holy arm’ refer normally to the Messiah. These passages do not mean the he was a part of God’s anatomy before he was conceived in Miriam. After-all, as God is spirit and not physical, such anthropomorphisms are used to speak of the outworking of God’s plans in the physical world. The Messiah is a very significant part of this outworking, so that calling him, the ‘right hand’ of God, is simply an allegorical way to accentuate his importance and pre-eminence, not his pre-existence.

It would also appear that Isaac Newton did not believe in the pre-existence of the Messiah either (see ‘ISAAC NEWTON AND SOCINIANISM: associations with a greater heresy’ by Stephen David Snobelen⁶).

Newton also argued that corruptions of language and ‘novitas verborum’ (strange words) were the primary causes of Church division. I think that one of the biggest problem with this whole approach is that it is Hellenistic in mindset and in turn reads back into the words of the authors of the New Testament, understandings that are totally out of their contextual intent.

We need to start with the Tanakh, not the NT to gain the underlying mindset of the NT authors and then we have a much greater chance of reading and interpreting their words correctly (though there are still verifiable redactions and interpolations that we also need to take account of).

Once we have some reasonable grasp of the Tanakh and the Hebraic and Biblical mindset and approach, we then also need to take into account the historical and contextual environment into which each of the NT writers spoke.

I have given an overview of how we need to approach the Bible in my short article ‘Understanding The Bible 101’⁷.

Take the seemingly simple concept of ‘firstborn’. When we speak of a parent having two children it is clear what is meant by ‘firstborn’, at least in terms of who is the oldest.

When we read this term, and see it as having a broader meaning in the Tanakh though, we see it means to be first or higher in recognition or eminence. This is most emphatically declared in Ex 4:22 “Then you shall say to Pharaoh, Thus says YHVH, Israel is my firstborn son”.

Here the meaning is clear. Israel was not ‘born’ before the other nations or peoples, but God is declaring that Israel comes first in His plans and affections.

We then see the term ‘firstborn’ used in Ps 89:26-27 in this same manner to describe the coming Messiah of Israel: “He will call to me, ‘You are my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation!’ I will also appoint him my firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth.”

Again it is very clear here, and from the prophecy of Deuteronomy 18 and many others that the Messiah would be an Israelite (from Moses brethren) and that he would be appointed (not created) the head of Israel, that is the highest in rank (the firstborn). Nowhere does the Tanakh ever suggest that an angel or spirit being is ever born or could be born as a man.

Certainly, the angels may at times take on the appearance of man to some degree, but the whole message in the Tanakh of a future end-times Messiah, is of a man, a human being first created in the womb of a woman.

In fact, the ‘angels’ of the Tanakh even declare themselves that they are not God and do not have priority over the rest of creation, even though they existed before this Universe was created.

⁶ An excellent, more recent work on Newton by Snobelen can be read here <http://biblestudentarchives.com/documents/NewtonSocinianism.pdf>

⁷ <http://www.charismacomputers.com.au/Understanding%20the%20Bible%20101.pdf>

Consider Judges 13:16 *"The angel of YHVH said to Manoah, "Though you detain me, I won't eat of your bread; and if you will prepare a burnt offering, you must offer it to YHVH."*

Here the angel of God clearly states that, though he is God's agent, he is not God, in the same way that we learn that it was an angel of God in the burning bush, not God Himself. Once the end-times Messiah Yeshua is created and grows to become a man, he also becomes a perfect agent of God.

We see also that his 'appointment' was only in his lifetime as well – see for example, Yeshua's baptism and my article on Psalms 2:6⁸.

It is also clear from the Jewish inter-testament writings that it was only the Gnostics, who were pagans and not God-fearing, (for example the Pythagoreans - 500 BCE), who promoted the immortality of the soul and who believed in any sort of 'spirit becoming man' concept.

The Tanakh instead declares very clearly that a man is and cannot be God or even a purely spirit being, but that his mind, body, soul/spirit is one whole – it cannot be separated, no part has a separate existence. When the body dies, the spirit/soul dies. We see in these few verses that the two are intimately linked – you can't have one without the other, both before conception and after death:

Psalms 104: 29-30: *"When you take away their breath (pneuma), they perish and return to the dust from which they came. When you send forth your breath (pneuma), they are created."*

Ecclesiastes 12:7: *"And the dust returns to the earth as it once was, and the life breath (pneuma) returns to God who gave it."*

Psalms 33:6: *"When his spirit (pneuma) departs he returns to his earth; on that day his plans perish."*

What about John's Prologue:

Obviously, Trinitarians, Oneness and other non-Unitarian Christians see John's prologue as strongly inferring some pre-existence of the Messiah and some sort of inference of his deity.

The classic mistake though that they make is to start with the NT, and especially to start with John's Gospel, as if this NT stands on its own and the context of a Jewish disciple writing about the Messiah Yeshua after 66-67 CE, is a context with no prior history.

This very serious and very prevalent error is so overwhelmingly common amongst Christians. This is not where Yeshua started; this is not where the Apostle Paul started.

They both relied on the Hebrew Bible, the Tanakh. Both Yeshua when he repeatedly said *'It is written ...'* and the Apostle Paul when he said *"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work."* (2 Tim 3:16) were referring to the Tanakh. The NT did not exist when Yeshua and the Apostle Paul spoke these words.

Thus to understand anything in the NT and to appreciate the intent of the NT authors such as John, we need to look first into the Tanakh to understand their perspective and biblical reality, but also to documents from the inter-testamental time, to appreciate common Jewish thinking, understanding and terminology.

In this respect even sectarian works from this period can be relevant. That is, John's Gospel was not written in a vacuum. As a follower of Yeshua, a member of the Christian sect of the proto-Judaism (to use Prof. David Flusser's term) of his time, the Apostle John was a Hebraist and essentially Pharisaic in background and biblical orientation.

So with this appreciation, it is worth asking if the concepts and ideas presented in John's prologue were already existent or even prevalent in the Tanakh and in Jewish thought of his time.

What we find is that John's prologue, for example John 1:3 *"through him (the Word) everything came to be: no single thing was created without him"* was a Jewish 'commonplace'. That is, it was already part of Jewish writings prior to John.

⁸ <http://www.charismacomputers.com.au/Christian%20site/Psalm%202%20verse%206%20commentary.pdf>

For example in the Book of Jubilees we read that God "*has created everything by His word*" (12:4), and so it is also said in Wisdom of Solomon 9:1.

Even more similar to John's prologue is the wording of two sentences in the Dead Sea Scrolls: "*By His (God's) knowledge everything came to be, and everything which is happening — He establishes it by his design and without Him [nothing] is done*" (1QS XI: 11).

And "*By the wisdom of Thy knowledge Thou didst establish their destiny ere they came into being, and according [Thy will] everything came to be, and without Thee [nothing] is done*" (1QH 1:19-20).

These two kindred sentences in the Scrolls stress the Jewish sectarian doctrine of predestination (that is, existing in the mind of God) and not the Christian 'hypostatic' ('essence' – a term used to imply a separate personality or second person of God) aspect of knowledge and wisdom, by which everything came to be.

These purely sectarian Scrolls had no interest in a hypostatic point of view and so any later hypostatic interpretation by Christianity would appear to be a seriously flawed and mistaken understanding.

The idea that God created the world through his 'word' is a Jewish concept. In fact, the Tanakh informs us that Almighty created the entire universe through 'fiats'; through His word.

But, not only does the 'word' of God have a creative function, it also has an analytical function.

Consider for example, Hebrews 4:12: "*For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit. ...and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*"

Here we see the 'word' or 'logos' having an analytical function.

While it is difficult to accurately encapsulate his understanding, the Hellenistic Jew Philo (20 BCE – 50 CE) appears to have seen the Logos as either 'reason' or an 'idea' (both suggesting a plan), or an instrument of God's will (perhaps suggesting an active 'blue-print').

From '*Philo of Alexandria: An Annotated Bibliography*', 1987-1996, edited by David T. Runia, Helena Maria Keizer: "*For Philo, though he uses terms familiar for Christians, the Logos is neither a Person, nor the Incarnated Logos, nor God's son.*" - M. Azkoul, p231

"*Sometimes Philo speaks of the Logos as God's Reason, at other times as the instrument of God's will. In a Platonizing interpretation of the creation of man, Philo understands the Logos to be an idea after which earthly man was fashioned.*" - W.C. Young, p301.

So, when we consider the context and historical background and influences that existed in John's worldview, we should see that any 'hypostatic' or Christian 'pre-existent' consideration was far from his mind and intentions. In fact, as many have pointed out, John himself makes this abundantly clear when he states in John 20:31 "*... but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*"

What did the Gospel author here, a Jewish man, most likely understand by the term Son of God'?

The Jewish people, the Tanakh and Judaism have never argued that God literally sires children. However, they have for many thousands of years seen God as their Father and King of the Universe. Jewish tradition therefore refers to God as "Avinu, Malkeinu" meaning "our Father, our King," because the metaphor describes the close relationship between Israel and God that is a relationship like that between a father and his son. In this way, Israel is a 'son of God', because Israel and her people are 'children of God'. This is a relational reality, NOT a literal, physical reality.

From the Books of Moses we see that Israel is occasionally referred to as, "Israel, my son" or "Israel, my firstborn."

Ex 4:22 "*Then you shall say to Pharaoh, Thus says the LORD, Israel is my firstborn son*"

Deut.14:1 "*You are the sons of the LORD your God. You shall not cut yourselves or make any baldness on your foreheads for the dead.*"

So here we see clearly the Israel herself is a 'son of God' and her people, are 'sons of God'. Also though Nathan the prophet declared to King David, that his son Solomon would build the Temple of God and would be a 'son of God'.

2 Sam. 7:14 "*I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son.*"

Further, there are at least two places in the Tanakh where we see that the Messiah will be a special 'son of God':

In Psalms 2:7 *"I will tell of the decree: YHVH said to me, You are my Son; today I have begotten you."*

And Ps 89:26-27: *"He shall cry to me, You are my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation.*

27 And I will make him the firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth."

Thus, John is quite emphatic that the Messiah is part of Israel, and a 'son of God' meaning a human being, not a spirit.

Disputable Texts:

There are a number of other texts in the NT that appear to imply some 'pre-existence', though already it should be clear that this concept can only refer to existing before Creation in the mind of God. I will briefly address just a couple of these that have not already been addressed.

1 Corinthians 10:4 *"... and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ."*

Firstly, we need to appreciate that 'Rock' was a label or name given at times for the Almighty. For example:

Deut 32:4 *"The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he."*

Given that the oldest existing versions of 1 Corinthians 10 apparently date to after 100 CE⁹, when there had already been a major schism in the church, and these texts came from the Hellenistic church, it seems very possible that the reference to 'Rock' was actually to God not the 'Christ'.

Some variants have God not 'Christ' in verse 9. Thus we could postulate that it would have only required that 'God' in verse 4 be replaced by 'Christ' (i.e. some minor though significant redaction has taken place). If this were the case the text could have read:

1 Cor 10:

"1 I want you to know, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea,

2 and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea,

3 and all ate the same spiritual food,

4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was GOD.

5 Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

6 Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did.

7 Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.

8 We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day.

*9 We must not put **God** to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents,"*

This reading certainly seems more consistent internally as well as in better agreement with the Tanakh. Further, if we consider Psalms 89:26-27 to be a Messianic prophecy and refer to Yeshua, then Yeshua is prophetically declaring that his Father is his Rock!

Ps 89:26-27

"26 He shall cry to me, You are my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation.

27 And I will make him the firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth."

So, if this is correct, the Apostle Paul would actually be contradicting Yeshua in 1 Cor 10:4 to try and state that Yeshua was the Rock!

Even if the translation does faithfully communicate the Apostle Paul's words, it could still be interpreted that he saw the Messiah allegorically as the spiritual rock, even to the Hebrews before they entered the Land, as the Messiah represented the promise of a brighter and better future (as declared through Moses in Deuteronomy 18). The hope of the coming of the Messiah then could be seen to go with them, and go with us in all we experience.

⁹ 1 Cor 1:9:4-14:14 – dated 81-96 A.D. - according to *'The Complete Text of the Earliest New Testament Manuscripts'* (Young Kyu Kim 1988)

This then, would make this an allegorical or metaphorical statement, NOT a statement that Yeshua previously existed in the form of a rock!

The sixth chapter of the Gospel of John contains a number of passages that appear to suggest that the Messiah 'came down' from heaven and is to return there. Let us consider one of them. John 6:62 *"Then what if you were to see the son of man ascending to where he was before?"* (others are John 6:38, John 6:48-51, & John 6:58).

This verse, if legitimate¹⁰, would seem on the surface to suggest that a human being ('son of man'), in this case specifically, Yeshua, was some other place above (heaven by implication) in the past, and plans to return there.

We have already considered the impossibility of a physical human being having existed prior to his creation in heaven, so we may need to re-think what Yeshua really meant here. Greg Deuble, in his book *'They never told me this in church'* (2nd Ed. p213), appreciating that Yeshua often referred to the prophecies of Daniel, argues that Yeshua is here speaking of the vision of Daniel in which he, 'the son of man' was seen in heaven by Daniel. He argues that it is in this manner that Yeshua, a human being was previously in heaven.

This approach is certainly consistent with the 'pre-existence' of Israel, Moses, the Torah and Temple, etc., and even the crucifixion of Yeshua, all being in the mind of God before the Creation of the Universe.

One of the most frequent references used by Christians who argue for 'pre-existence' is Colossians 1:15-20¹¹.

Some read this passage as the Apostle Paul inferring that Yeshua was the Creator of the Universe (rather than the creator of the Coming Age, because of his faith and actions leading him to be declared the Second Adam, the first-born of a new Creation).

The problem is that if the Apostle Paul really was arguing that Yeshua was the Creator of the Universe he would have been contradicting the very words of his 'God', as Yeshua declared that the Almighty had created the Universe not he himself.

Mark 13:19 *"For in those days there will be such tribulation as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now, and never will be."*

Conclusion:

This article is really only meant as an outline and introductory investigation of the doctrine of 'pre-existence' of the Messiah. For much more comprehensive treatments I recommend Greg Deuble's book, *'They never told me this in church'* and Anthony Buzzard's, *'Jesus was Not a Trinitarian'*.

I hope I have given some pause for thought though, and shown that the concept of 'pre-existence' as promoted by a significant portion of the Christian church is nothing like and in fact, contradictory to, the understanding of 'pre-existence' detailed in the Tanakh (OT) and accepted by Judaism.

It seems only possible to arrive at this Christian understanding by divorcing the NT text from its foundations, and the people described therein from their Hebraic roots and upbringing.

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¹⁰ The Gospel of John, while containing some very Hebraic elements is also possibly the most redacted and interpolated of all the books of the NT. For example, chapter 8 is extremely anti-Semitic and this would seem totally contradictory to the 'goal of Messiah'.

¹¹ For one of the best articles on Colossians 1 see Anthony Buzzard's site – <http://focusonthekingdom.org/articles/colossians.htm> by William M. Wachtel