

The Pre-Existence of Jesus

John 1:1-5, 8:31-59

Today, we are considering the pre-existence of Jesus. Jesus didn't come into existence when He was born into this world a little over 2,000 years ago, rather He existed with God from eternity past. This is a doctrine that can actually make a difference in our lives. We are going to look at this doctrine as it is articulated in the Gospel of John and then one of the core implications of His pre-existence for our lives.

Opening Question: When you were growing up, who was one authority in your life that you are now thankful for? Why?

Read John 1:1-5

1. If this passage was all we knew about Christ, what would we know?
2. What do these verses say about Jesus' role in creation (see also Colossians 1:16)?

Steve said:

The Scriptures don't make much of an attempt to explain exactly what each person of the God-head did in creation; that wasn't the point. The point in the gospel of John is that when people encountered Jesus they encountered the One who had created the earth and everything in it.

3. How might it affect you if you consistently remembered that when Jesus is speaking to you through the Word, it is the Creator speaking to the created?

Read John 8:31-59

4. What does Jesus claim about Himself in verse 58?

Steve said:

To summarize: In the context of John 8, Jesus' pre-existence implied authority. It's as if Jesus were saying, "The fact that I existed **as** God and **with** God (My heavenly Father) from eternity past suggests that **you should listen when I speak.**" Specifically, they should have paid attention when Jesus said to them: 31 "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

5. What is Jesus' promise in verse 32?

6. To experience this promise, Jesus says we need to continue in His word/truly be disciples of His. What does it mean to continue in His word?

Steve said:

Think about an area of your life in which you need freedom, an area in which you experience bondage to sin. Maybe it's anger (which can show up in a dozen different ways - some people explode, others withdraw, others are sarcastic and insulting, others are passive aggressive). If you find that you're angry and can't turn it off, how about admitting to Jesus, "You're right, I'm enslaved to this particular sin." And then you're in a position to be apprenticed to Him and learn from Him, letting His word dwell richly within you. You say to Jesus, "Since You are the pre-existent One who dwelt with God from eternity past, I believe You and submit to You. I believe that you can teach me the truth to the point where it sets me free from my sin."

Whatever your bondage - whether it involves worry or lust or pride; whether alcohol or drugs or money - this would be a great day to turn to Jesus and believe that His teaching is true. Why? Because His teaching has the authority of One who was with God and who was God. Honestly, you may have gotten used to your bondage and you've learned to manage it. Or you may have come to believe that Jesus' promise of freedom doesn't apply to you; you've lost hope that your life could ever be different. Whatever the case, this would be a great day to turn back to Jesus in faith.

7. As you think about an area of your life in which you need freedom, do you ever find it hard to believe that you will ever experience true freedom in that area? Why or why not?
8. If you could dwell on and remember that this promise was made by One who taught with authority, how might it affect your hope that things truly can change?
9. In this area of struggle, what might it look like to say to Jesus, "Since You are the pre-existent One who dwelt with God from eternity past, I believe You and submit to You"?