

THE PRE-EXISTENCE OF CHRIST

PRESENTED BY

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GREEN LAWN CHURCH OF CHRIST

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LAST LORD'S DAY EVENING WE DISCUSSED THE DIETY OF JESUS CHRIST. TONIGHT, WE COME TO DISCUSS ANOTHER ASPECT OF THAT DIETY WITHOUT WHICH HE WOULD NOT BE DIETY, AND THAT IS THE PRE-EXISTENCE OF JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD. SOMEHOW WE SEEM TO HAVE GOTTEN THE IDEA THAT JESUS IS COMPLETELY A NEW TESTAMENT CHARACTER, AND AS WE GO BACK AND STUDY THE PAGES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT WE BELIEVE THAT, WHILE WE FIND JESUS CHRIST IN PROPHECY, WE DO NOT FIND HIM IN PERSON. HOWEVER, THIS IS NOT THE TEACHING OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, FOR AS WE TURN BACK THROUGH THE PAGES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AND STUDY IT CAREFULLY, WE FIND CHRIST REFERRED TO NOT ONLY IN PROPHECY--THAT HE SHOULD COME INTO THE WORLD--BUT WE FIND CHRIST REFERRED TO AS A PERSON. WE FIND JESUS MENTIONED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. NOW HE IS NEVER CALLED JESUS. IN FACT, IN THE OLD TESTAMENT HE IS NEVER CALLED THE CHRIST. HE IS REFERRED TO AS THE SON. HE IS REFERRED TO AS JEHOVAH. MOST OFTEN HE IS REFERRED TO AS THE ANGEL OF JEHOVAH. I THINK IF WE WOULD GO THROUGH THE OLD TESTAMENT AND STUDY REFERENCES TO THE ANGEL OF JEHOVAH REMEMBERING THAT AT ALL TIMES (WITH ONE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION IN HAGGAI 1:13) THIS EXPRESSION REFERS TO CHRIST WHO CAME IN THE FLESH, IT WOULD CAUSE US TO COMPLETELY RECONSTRUCT OUR THINKING CONCERNING THE TEACHING OF THE OLD TESTAMENT CONCERNING CHRIST. FOR INSTANCE, IF YOU TURNED TO GENESIS 16 YOU WOULD FIND WHERE HAGAR WENT AWAY FROM THE HOUSE OF ABRAHAM. AS HAGAR WENT INTO THE WILDERNESS BETWEEN KADESH AND BERED, YOU WILL REMEMBER THAT THE ANGEL OF JEHOVAH CAME TO HAGAR AND GAVE HER HOPE, AND TOLD HER TO ARISE AND GO BACK TO HER MISTRESS SARAH AND SUBMIT HERSELF UNTO SARAH AND THAT A GREAT NATION WOULD COME FORTH FROM THAT WHICH HAD BEEN CONCEIVED IN HER WOMB. SHE DID AS SHE HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED, BUT THE IMPORTANT THING HERE IS THAT THE ANGEL OF JEHOVAH WAS THE INSTRUMENT OF DIETY WHEREBY THIS MESSAGE WAS GIVEN, AND THE ANGEL OF JEHOVAH HERE IS THE SECOND PERSON OF THE TRINITY. COME TO GENESIS 22:11-18, AND YOU WILL FIND ABRAHAM AS HE TOOK THE CHILD ISAAC, THE SON OF PROMISE, TO THE MOUNTAIN TO OFFER HIM AS A SACRIFICE, AND YOU WILL READ THAT THE ANGEL OF JEHOVAH CAME TO ABRAHAM AND TOLD HIM TO STAY HIS HAND AND TO HARM NOT THE LAD. THE ANGEL OF JEHOVAH WHICH ACCOMPLISHED THIS WAS THE CHRIST WHO CAME IN THE FLESH. TURN TO EXODUS 3, AND HERE YOU READ ABOUT GOD APPEARING UNTO MOSES FROM THE BURNING BUSH, BUT IF YOU WILL READ VERY CAREFULLY IN THAT PASSAGE, WHILE THE BEING THERE IS REFERRED TO AS JEHOVAH, HE IS FURTHER IDENTIFIED AS BEING THE ANGEL OF JEHOVAH WHICH APPEARED UNTO MOSES FROM THE MIDST OF THE BUSH. THIS IS THE SECOND PERSON OF THE TRINITY WHO CAME IN THE FLESH--EVEN CHRIST. IN EXODUS 14:19 YOU READ OF THE ANGEL OF JEHOVAH GOING BEFORE THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL AND IN I CORINTHIANS 10:14 THE APOSTLE PAUL VERY DEFINITELY IDENTIFIES THE ANGEL OF JEHOVAH WHEN HE SAYS, "AND THAT ROCK WHICH FOLLOWED THEM WAS JESUS CHRIST." FINALLY, TURN TO I KINGS 19. YOU WILL REMEMBER THAT ELIJAH HAD BECOME SO DISCOURAGED HE FLED OUT INTO THE WILDERNESS, JEZEBEL HAD THREATENED HIS LIFE AND HE THOUGHT HE WAS THE ONLY MAN LEFT LIVING WHO WAS FAITHFUL TO GOD. AS HE WENT INTO THE WILDERNESS AN ANGEL, IDENTIFIED AS THE ANGEL OF JEHOVAH, CAME UNTO ELIJAH, PREPARED FOOD FOR HIM AND COMMANDED HIM TO ARISE AND EAT. THE ANGEL OF JEHOVAH WAS JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD.

WHEN WE COME INTO THE NEW TESTAMENT WE FIND VERY DEFINITE TEACHING CONCERNING THE PRE-EXISTENCE OF CHRIST. I THINK PERHAPS ONE OF THE GREATEST PASSAGES IS THAT WHICH WE READ FOR OUR TEXT IN THE LESSON DEALING WITH THE DIETY OF CHRIST. IN PHILLIPIANS 2 PAUL WROTE: "LET THIS MIND BE IN YOU, WHICH WAS ALSO IN CHRIST JESUS: WHO, BEING IN THE FORM OF GOD, THOUGHT IT NOT ROBBERY TO BE EQUAL WITH GOD; BUT MADE HIMSELF OF NO REPUTATION, AND TOOK UPON HIM THE FORM OF A SERVANT, AND WAS MADE IN THE LIKENESS OF MEN: AND BEING FOUND IN FASHION AS A MAN, HE HUMBLING HIMSELF, AND BECAME OBEDIENT UNTO DEATH, EVEN THE DEATH OF THE CROSS. WHEREFORE GOD ALSO HATH HIGHLY EXALTED HIM, AND GAVE HIM A NAME WHICH IS ABOVE EVERY NAME: THAT AT THE NAME OF JESUS EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW, OF THINGS IN HEAVEN, AND THINGS IN EARTH, AND THINGS UNDER THE EARTH. AND THAT EVERY TONGUE SHOULD CONFESS THAT JESUS CHRIST IS LORD, TO THE GLORY OF GOD THE FATHER."

I SUPPOSE THE MOST FAMILIAR PASSAGE DEALING WITH THE PRE-EXISTENCE OF CHRIST IS THAT VERSE WITH WHICH JOHN BEGAN HIS GOSPEL WHEN HE SAID, "IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD AND THE WORD WAS WITH GOD, AND THE WORD WAS GOD." THE WORD IS IDENTIFIED IN THE 14TH VERSE AS BEING CHRIST, FOR JOHN SAYS, "AND THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH, AND DWELT AMONG US, (AND WE BEHELD HIS GLORY, THE GLORY AS OF THE ONLY BEGOTTEN OF THE FATHER,) FULL OF GRACE AND TRUTH." IN THIS FIRST VERSE, WHEN JOHN SAYS, "IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD AND THE WORD WAS WITH GOD, AND THE WORD WAS GOD," HE TELLS US THREE VERY IMPORTANT THINGS ABOUT THE PRE-EXISTENCE OF JESUS CHRIST. FIRST, "IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD." HE IS NOT SAYING THAT THE WORD BEGAN AT THAT POINT WHEN ALL ELSE BEGAN, BUT HE IS ESTABLISHING HERE THE PRE-EXISTENCE OF THE WORD, OR OF CHRIST. HE IS SAYING, AND LITERALLY IT COULD BE TRANSLATED, "BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN THE WORD WAS" OR "BEFORE ANYTHING WAS CHRIST WAS," AND, OF COURSE, ALL THINGS WERE THEN CREATED BY HIM. JOHN SAYS THAT HE IS BEFORE TIME, THAT HE IS ETERNAL. BUT THEN SOMEONE MIGHT ASK, "IF THE WORD EXISTED BEFORE THE WORLD, WHAT RELATIONSHIP DID IT SUSTAIN TO GOD? WHAT RELATIONSHIP DID THE WORD, THE SECOND MEMBER OF THE TRINITY, SUSTAIN TO THE FATHER, THE FIRST MEMBER OF THE TRINITY?" JOHN TELLS US, "IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD, AND THE WORD WAS WITH GOD." THIS MEANS MORE THAN SIMPLY CO-EXISTENCE. THE PREPOSITION WHICH IS USED HERE IS USED REGULARLY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT TO DENOTE THE PRESENCE OF ONE PERSON WITH ANOTHER PERSON AND JOHN IS SAYING THAT THERE IS A DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE TWO. THAT THEY ARE BOTH THERE, THAT THEY ARE BOTH PERSONS. JOHN ESTABLISHES THE PRESENCE OF MORE THAN ONE IN THE GODHEAD. "IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD, AND THE WORD WAS WITH GOD." THERE WAS AN INTER-RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THEM AS PERSON WITH PERSON. AND THIRDLY, JOHN TELLS US THE NATURE OF THE WORD. "IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD (BEFORE ANYTHING WAS THE WORD WAS) AND THE WORD WAS WITH GOD, AND THE WORD WAS GOD." HERE HE IDENTIFIES THE VERY SUBSTANCE OF THE WORD. HERE HE SAYS THAT HE WAS DIETY, THAT JESUS CHRIST IN HIS PRE-EXISTENT STATE WAS DIVINE. HE WAS HIMSELF GOD. NOTICE THAT HE DOES NOT SAY HE WAS A GOD FOR SURELY THIS CONCEPT WOULD BE REPULSIVE TO THE EAR OF THE JEWS FOR THE JEW BELIEVED THAT THERE WAS ONE GOD AND JOHN SAYS THERE IS ONE GOD. BUT HE SAYS THIS JESUS, THIS PRE-EXISTENT LOGOS, THIS PRE-EXISTENT WORD, WAS GOD. "IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD, AND THE WORD WAS WITH GOD, AND THE WORD WAS GOD."

THE EMPHASIS HERE IS UPON THE TIME ELEMENT. JOHN IS NOT SIMPLY INTERESTED IN WHO WAS IN THE BEGINNING, BUT THE EMPHASIS HERE IS UPON THE TIME ELEMENT, AND HE IS SAYING THAT THIS CHRIST OF WHOM HE IS SPEAKING EXISTED BEFORE THERE WAS EVER A FINITE BEGINNING. IF THIS WORD DID NOT EXIST BEFORE THERE WAS A FINITE BEGINNING, THEN EVERYTHING THAT JOHN HAS TO SAY ABOUT CHRIST, AND THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN IS THE GREAT GOSPEL ON THE LIFE OF CHRIST, HAS ABSOLUTELY NO VALUE AND NO MEANING AT ALL.

TO THIS WE WILL ADD TWO STATEMENTS. ONE WHICH WE READ AS OUR TEXT FROM PHILIPPIANS 2 WHERE WE FOUND THAT HE WAS IN THE FORM OF GOD, AND THAT HE CAME INTO THE FORM OF MAN OR OF SERVANT. THIS WORD TRANSLATED "FORM" COMES FROM A WORD WHICH LITERALLY MEANS "BODILY SUBSTANCE." NOW WE HAVE TROUBLE WITH THAT EXPRESSION WHEN WE APPLY IT TO GOD, FOR WE HAVE LEARNED THAT GOD IS SPIRIT AND THAT A SPIRIT HATH NOT FLESH AND BONES. SO WHEN WE TALK ABOUT "BODILY SUBSTANCE" OF GOD, WHAT DO WE MEAN? WE CANNOT CONCEIVE OF A SPIRIT BEING OF WHICH GOD IS ONE EXISTING WITHOUT SOME KIND OF FORM. NOW WE HAVE NOT SEEN IT, WE DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS. GOD HASN'T DESCRIBED IT TO US IN HIS WORD, BUT WE KNOW THAT THERE IS FORM. GOD IS NOT SOME KIND OF COSMIC BLOB THAT IS JUST OUT THERE SOMEWHERE. GOD HAS A FORM AND PAUL SAYS THAT JESUS EXISTED IN THAT FORM. WHATEVER GOD'S SUBSTANCE WAS, WHATEVER THE FATHER'S FORM WAS, SO WAS THE FORM OF THE SON. TO HELP US UNDERSTAND IT, HE SAYS HE TOOK ON HIM THE FORM OF A MAN. IN OTHER WORDS, WHEN MEN LOOKED AT JESUS AND SAW HIS HUMANITY IF THEY COULD SEE HIM IN HIS PRE-EXISTENT STATE THEY WOULD SEE THE VERY FORM OF GOD, THE FATHER.

FINALLY, TO THIS WE WILL ADD THE STATEMENT OF JESUS HIMSELF WHO CLAIMED TO PRE-EXIST ALL THINGS. IN REVELATION 1:8 JESUS SPEAKS AND SAYS, "I AM ALPHA AND OMEGA, THE BEGINNING AND THE ENDING, SAITH THE LORD, WHICH IS, AND WHICH WAS, AND WHICH IS TO COME, THE ALMIGHTY." HERE HE SAYS OF HIMSELF JUST EXACTLY WHAT JOHN SAID WHEN HE SAID, "IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD, AND THE WORD WAS WITH GOD, AND THE WORD WAS GOD."

BUT NOW THIS QUESTION. I THINK WE HAVE TAKEN ENOUGH VERSES TO SHOW THAT THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT JESUS AS CHRIST PRE-EXISTED THE FINITE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD. BUT THE QUESTION IS, "WHY SHOULD YOU AND I BE INTERESTED IN THAT? WHY SHOULD IT MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE TO US WHETHER CHRIST PRE-EXISTED, STARTED WITH THE WORLD, OR CAME INTO BEING WHEN HE WAS BORN IN BETHLEHEM? WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?" I WANT TO SUGGEST TO YOU THAT IT MAKES ALL OF THE DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD. NOT ONLY DOES IT MAKE ALL OF THE DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD, BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY IT MAKES ALL OF THE DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD WHICH IS TO COME. WE NEED TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT THE PRE-EXISTENCE OF JESUS CHRIST BECAUSE SUCH A RELATIONSHIP AS JESUS CHRIST NOW SUSTAINS TO THE FATHER COULD NOT HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED AT ANY POINT IN TIME. WE LOOK AT THE LIFE OF JESUS, WE THINK ABOUT ITS BEING A PERFECT LIFE. BUT THERE IS NO EARTHLY LIFE, NO MATTER HOW GOOD, NO MATTER HOW HONEST, NO MATTER HOW KIND, NO MATTER HOW FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT OF GOD, THAT COULD HAVE GIVEN TO JESUS CHRIST THE PREROGATIVES WHICH HE CLAIMED TO HAVE. JESUS SAID THE FATHER'S JUDGMENT IS MINE. JESUS SAID THE FATHER'S POWER IS MINE. JESUS SAID THE FATHER'S POWER TO REDEEM IS MINE AND THAT POWER EVEN COMES THROUGH ME. NONE OF THE PREROGATIVES--THE POWER TO JUDGE, THE POWER TO REDEEM, THE POWER TO SPEAK AS JESUS SPOKE--NONE OF THESE THINGS COULD HAVE COME FROM ANY EARTHLY LIFE. THEY COULD NOT HAVE COME BY ANY HUMAN ACHIEVEMENT, BUT THEY COULD ONLY COME THROUGH ONE WHO HAD BEEN WITH GOD THE FATHER AND WHO ANTICIPATED RETURNING TO THAT FATHER WHEN HIS EARTHLY TASK WAS DONE. INDEED THIS IS JUST EXACTLY WHAT JESUS SAID OF HIMSELF IN JOHN 17 WHEN HE WAS IN THE GARDEN PRAYING. HE KNEW THAT HIS DEATH WAS IMMINENT AND THAT SOON HE WOULD RETURN TO GOD AND HERE IS WHAT JESUS PRAYED IN THE FIFTH VERSE: "AND NOW, O FATHER, GLORIFY THOU ME WITH THINE OWN SELF, WITH THE GLORY WHICH I HAD WITH THEE BEFORE THE WORLD WAS." JESUS WASN'T GOING TO SOMETHING HE HAD NEVER HAD BEFORE BUT IT WAS BECAUSE HE HAD HAD IT BEFORE THAT HE COULD ANTICIPATE RETURNING TO IT.

WE NEED TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT THE PRE-EXISTENCE OF CHRIST BECAUSE THIS --HIS PRE-EXISTENCE-- MEANS THAT HE WAS JUST WHAT JOHN SAID HE WAS, THAT HE WAS GOD. THIS IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE THE CROSS OF A HUMAN CHRIST WAS NOT AND COULD NEVER BE ADEQUATE TO DO FOR A MAN WHAT MAN NEEDED TO HAVE DONE FOR HIM. WHAT IF IT HAD ONLY BEEN A HUMAN BEING UPON THAT TREE? WHAT IF IT HAD BEEN NOTHING MORE THAN THE BLOOD OF MAN WHICH WAS SHED THERE? THERE WOULD STILL BE NO REDEMPTION. THERE WOULD STILL BE NO ATONEMENT. THE CROSS HAS MEANING AND THE CROSS HAS VALIDITY BECAUSE IT WAS THE BLOOD OF GOD AND MAN WHICH WAS SHED THAT DAY.

THERE IS NO HUMAN CROSS THAT COULD ADEQUATELY ACCOUNT FOR THE CHANGES WHICH THE CROSS HAS BROUGHT IN THE HEARTS AND THE MINDS OF MEN. LET US TAKE JUST ONE EXAMPLE. LET US LOOK BACK TO THE LIFE OF ONE SAUL OF TARSUS, A MAN WHO WAS ZEALOUS AS A PHARISEE, A MAN WHO WAS A PHARISEE OF THE PHARISEES, A MAN WHO WAS JEW AMONG JEWS, A MAN WHO BREATHED OUT THREATENINGS AND SLAUGHTERINGS AGAINST THE CHURCH AND WENT AND DRAGGED MEN AND WOMEN UNTO PRISON COMMITTING THEM EVEN UNTO DEATH. LET US SEE THIS MAN AS HE COMES FACE TO FACE WITH A CRUCIFIED CHRIST. NOT WITH A CRUCIFIED HUMAN, BUT WITH GOD WHO GAVE HIMSELF UPON THAT TREE AND LET US SEE THIS MAN AS HE IS TRANSFORMED FROM ONE WHO BREATHES OUT THREATENINGS AGAINST THE SAINTS, TO ONE WHO GIVES HIS LIFE TO MAKE SAINTS FOR GOD. LET US SEE HIM AS HE CEASES TO BREATHE OUT THE THREATENINGS AND AS HE BECOMES ONE WHO SPENDS HIMSELF AND GIVES HIS LIFE SEEKING TO MAKE SONS OF KING JESUS. THERE IS ONLY ONE EXPLANATION FOR IT AND THAT IS THAT THE CROSS OF JESUS CHRIST, THE CROSS EXPERIENCED ON CALVARY, WAS THE WORKING OUT IN TIME OF THAT WHICH HAD BEEN DETERMINED EVEN BEFORE THE WORLD WAS (I PETER 1:20).

WE NEED TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT THE PRE-EXISTENCE OF JESUS CHRIST BECAUSE ONLY A CHRIST WHO IS THE KING OF AN ETERNAL PAST COULD EVER HOPE TO BE THE KING OF AN ENDLESS FUTURE. IF CHRIST WERE NOT THE KING FROM AN ETERNAL PAST, THAT IS IF HE WERE NOT FROM ALL ETERNITY, THEN HE WOULD BE UNABLE TO GIVE US ANY HOPE FOR AN ETERNITY WHICH IS YET TO COME. AFTER ALL, THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST BEGAN BEFORE HE CAME INTO THE WORLD. WE TALKED ABOUT THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST UPON THE CROSS AND TRULY, AS FAR AS WE ARE CONCERNED, THIS MAY BE THE APEX OF IT FOR IT WAS THERE UPON THAT CROSS THAT HE SHED HIS BLOOD WHICH APPLIED TO YOUR HEART AND TO MINE CAN TAKE AWAY THE GUILT OF OUR SINS, BUT WHEN WE PROPERLY UNDERSTAND THE PRE-EXISTANT NATURE OF CHRIST THEN WE REALIZE THAT THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST BEGAN BEFORE HE EVER CAME TO EARTH AND THAT HIS CROSS WAS THAT OF A LAMB SLAIN "BEFORE THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE WORLD." READ I PETER 1:20 WHERE CONCERNING CHRIST IT SAYS, "WHO VERILY WAS FOREORDAINED BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD, BUT WAS MANIFEST IN THESE LAST TIMES FOR YOU," YES, "THOUGH HE WERE A SON, YET LEARNED HE OBEDIENCE BY THE THINGS THAT HE SUFFERED." BUT THE OBEDIENCE OF JESUS CHRIST LOSES ALL OF ITS REAL MEANING FOR US IF THAT OBEDIENCE DID NOT ARISE FROM ANY POINT OTHER THAN THE EARTH. NOT ONLY DOES IT LOSE MEANING, BUT IT LOSES ITS COMPELLING FORCE IF HE IS SIMPLY SAYING, "I AM A MAN, I HAVE OBEYED GOD, AND I WANT YOU AS A MAN TO OBEY ME AS I, AS A MAN, OBEYED GOD" WE TALK ABOUT HOW WONDERFUL IT IS THAT JESUS CONSENTED TO DIE, BUT, YOU SEE, JESUS CONSENTED NOT ONLY TO DIE, JESUS CONSENTED TO BE BORN. JESUS CONSENTED TO COME INTO THIS WORLD. JESUS CONSENTED TO EMPTY HIMSELF, TO POUR HIMSELF OUT, TO TAKE UPON HIM THE FORM OF A MAN. JESUS CONSENTED TO WALK IN THE HUMILITY OF THE FLESH. JESUS CONSENTED TO LEAVE HEAVEN. NO, HE DID NOT GIVE UP HIS DIETY BECAUSE IT WOULD HAVE BEEN IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM SO TO DO. THE ATTRIBUTES THAT MADE HIM GOD COULD NOT HAVE BEEN LAID DOWN. BUT HE DID CONSENT TO POUR HIMSELF OUT AND TO COME AND TO CLOTHE HIMSELF, HIS DIETY, IN THE FLESH AND HIS LIFE HERE, LIKE HIS DEATH, WAS THE RESULT OF HIS FREE WILL.

IT IS BECAUSE JESUS PRE-EXISTED, IT IS BECAUSE BEFORE THE WORLD WAS JESUS WAS, THAT JESUS CAN OFFER YOU HOPE TONIGHT THAT EFFECTS AN ENDLESS FUTURE. OUT OF AN ENDLESS PAST, OUT OF AN ETERNITY THAT STRETCHES BEHIND MORE THAN THE FINITE MIND OF MAN CAN IMAGINE, HE HOLDS OUT A HOPE TO YOU THAT STRETCHES OUT IN THE FUTURE FARTHER THAN THE FINITE EYE CAN SEE, AND BECAUSE JESUS IS GOD, THAT PROMISE HAS MEANING. I MIGHT MAKE YOU A THOUSAND AND ONE PROMISES, BUT IF I MADE EVEN ONE PROMISE THAT TALKED ABOUT LIFE AFTER DEATH, YOU WOULD NOT PAY ANY ATTENTION TO IT BECAUSE I DON'T HAVE ANY POWER TO EFFECT IT ONE WAY OR THE OTHER. BUT WHEN JESUS MAKES A PROMISE, THE WORLD LISTENS BECAUSE THE WORLD IS CONVINCED THAT JESUS IS GOD. WHAT YOU AND I NEED TO UNDERSTAND TO FULLY APPRECIATE OUR

SALVATION, IS TO UNDERSTAND THAT OUR SALVATION TONIGHT IS ROOTED IN THE VERY NATURE OF JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD, TO UNDERSTAND THAT OUR SALVATION PARTAKES OF THE VERY NATURE OF JESUS. THEREFORE THE SALVATION THAT I ENJOY IN THE LORD IS JUST AS ENDURING AS IS JESUS CHRIST THE SON OF GOD, AND IF HE IS NOT ENDURING, IF HE DIDN'T COME FROM AN ETERNAL PAST AND RETURN TO AN ETERNAL FUTURE, THEN MY SALVATION DOESN'T HAVE ANY PROSPECT, IT DOESN'T HAVE ANY HOPE AND WE ARE INDEED OF ALL MEN MOST MISERABLE.

IN HEBREWS 1:10 THE APOSTLE WROTE, "AND, THOU, LORD, IN THE BEGINNING HAS LAID THE FOUNDATION OF THE EARTH; AND THE HEAVENS ARE THE WORKS OF THINE HANDS: THEY SHALL PERISH, BUT THOU REMAINEST; AND THEY ALL SHALL WAX OLD AS DOTH A GARMENT. AND AS A VESTURE SHALT THOU FOLD THEM UP, AND THEY SHALL BE CHANGED; BUT THOU ART THE SAME, AND THY YEARS SHALL NOT FAIL." IT IS BECAUSE WE LOOK TO CHRIST AS THE SON OF GOD AND BECAUSE WE CAN SAY "THOU SHALT NOT CHANGE, YOU ARE THE SAME AND THY YEARS SHALL NOT FAIL," THAT, BY THE PRECIOUS WORD OF GOD, I CAN PROCLAIM UNTO YOU THE SALVATION THAT WILL NOT FAIL, A SALVATION THAT WILL NEVER FALTER, AND A SALVATION THAT WILL, IF YOU WILL WALK WITH THE LORD BRING YOU INTO HIS PRESENCE FOREVER AND FOREVER IN THE AFTER-WHILE. WHEN YOU CAME TO JESUS CHRIST YOU WERE NOT DELUDED BY SOME IMPOSTER WHOSE NAME AND FAME WILL FADE WITH THE PASSING OF TIME. YOU WERE NOT DELUDED BY SOME MAD-MAN WHO HAD DECEIVED HIMSELF INTO THINKING HE WAS GOD, BUT WHO MADE PROMISES THAT HE COULD NOT KEEP. IF YOU WOULD COME TO THE CROSS OF CHRIST, YOU WOULD COME TO A GOD WHO CREATED THE WORLD, AND HAVING CREATED THE WORLD GAVE HIMSELF FOR IT THAT HE MIGHT ALSO BECOME ITS REDEEMER, AND WHEN THE ELEMENTS WHICH MAKE UP THE WORLD SHALL MELT WITH FERVENT HEAT, WHEN THIS LIFE SHALL END AND THIS WORLD SHALL BE NO MORE, YOUR SOUL WHICH IS TIED FIRMLY TO JESUS CHRIST, WHICH IS ANCHORED IN THE ROCK OF AGES WILL STAND IMMOVEABLE AND UNSHAKEABLE BECAUSE IT IS UPON THE ROCK. I PLEAD WITH YOU TO LOOK INTO YOUR HEART. I PLEAD WITH YOU TO SEARCH YOUR SOUL AND SEE IF YOU ARE BUILDING YOUR LIFE UPON THE FIRM FOUNDATION OF THE PRE-EXISTENT CHRIST, TO SEE IF YOU HAVE A FULL FAITH IN HIM AS THE SON OF THE ONLY LIVING GOD, AND IF YOU HAVE GIVEN YOURSELF INTO HIS CARE AND KEEPING.