

Jesus' Pre-Existence

Our Eternal God

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I would like to start in Matthew the 13th chapter. Those of you who know your chapters will know that Matthew 13 is the parables, but I want something that happened just after that, right at the end of Matthew 13. We will read verses 53 through the first part of 57. But I am coming here because I want to show a reaction to Jesus Christ.

Matthew 13:53-57 Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these parables, that He departed from there. When He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished [Here it was His people.] and said, "Where did this Man get this wisdom and these mighty works? Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers, James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?" So they were offended at Him.

You might be surprised how many people still do not believe in the preexistence of Christ as Yahweh, as the God of the Old Testament, and as the Word, in what we would call prehistory. Now, those who have this belief that, or unbelief, maybe put it that way, those who have this unbelief about Jesus having a prior existence, believe essentially one of two things or we can put them in one of two categories.

First of all, the one category would be people who have a narrow view of monotheism. That is, they look at what is called the Shema in Deuteronomy 6:4, "Hear, O Israel: our Lord is one!" and they say, "Okay, there's only one God, only one person, and so that leaves Jesus Christ out." They do not understand that the word there about "one" in Deuteronomy 6:4 has to do with unity, not necessarily the numeral one or one thing alone. It could be many things, but they are together one. So that is the one side. Like for instance, the Jews. They deny Christ, they are offended by Christ because of

this thing. They have this idea that there is only one, one God, one person, and so it cannot be this Jesus from Nazareth. So they reject Him, they are offended at Him.

Another category that we can put people in who do not believe in Christ's preexistence are those who believe that He was a created being, that He was human like all of us, and therefore He is not worthy to be God. Some even believe, crazily, I do not see where they get this, but they believe that Jesus Christ was really Michael the archangel in another guise. Now they get this idea that Jesus was created from a poorly translated phrase in Revelation 3:14, which I want to go to. Again, if you know your chapters, this is in the midst of the seven letters to the churches there. And if you know how those chapters are divided, this is in the letter to the church to Laodicea.

Revelation 3:14 "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God.'

Now they understand that Jesus is the speaker here and they look at this, He is naming himself, He is giving Himself titles, Amen, Faithful and True Witness, and He also calls himself the Beginning of the creation of God. And that is our target here, "the Beginning of the creation of God." As I said, this is very poorly translated, almost like the translators were trying to push an agenda here. Because knowing Greek, they should have realized that that is not what this says, but it has hung around for a long time. The correct meaning of this phrase is the *Beginner* of the creation of God or we could also say the Author of the creation of God.

Beginning is rendered from the Greek word *archee*, which refers to an originating instrument or active cause of origin. Now, what is being referred to is what we find in Colossians 1, verses 15 through 17. And this is very clear. Paul writes,

Colossians 1:15-17 He [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. [now notice how he goes on to explain] For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created

through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

So in Revelation 3:14, Jesus is just taking the gist of what Paul has said here in Colossians 1 and in other places, and saying that He is the Beginner, the Author, the Source of God's creation. He is the one that did it all. Now we could call the Father the Creator because He is the one that said the word at the time. "We need this created, go do it." and He did it. But really the source of it was the one who became Jesus Christ. He is the Source or the *archee* of creation. In his *New Testament in the Language of Today*, a man named William F. Beck translates this in Revelation 3:14, "the Origin of God's creation. It originated from Him. As the Creator or the Originator of all things, Jesus is the Head and Governor of all creatures. He is, as it says in the Psalms, specifically Psalm 148, the King of creation."

Let us notice a few other verses here that also back up this point. Let us go back to Ephesians 3, verse 9. It breaks into a sentence.

Ephesians 3:9 and to make all people see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages had been hidden in God, who created all things through Jesus Christ.

We will go from there. We saw Colossians 1:16. Let us go to Hebrews the first chapter, verse 2. I am sure we all know this one quite well.

Hebrews 1:2 [God] has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds [or the ages, *aions* there in Greek].

It is very clear that the New Testament teaches that Jesus was *not* a created being, but in fact, He was the Creator of all things. And thus He must have existed prior to His birth as a human. He had to originate before the creation at least, because He is the one that made everything. He had a preexistence that is timeless, that is infinite in the past and will have one in the future. So there is no way that Christ was a created being. It just does not compute with what we have in the New Testament.

Now, I want to go on and further expand this idea of His preexistence. We are here in Hebrews already. Let us go to chapter 7, verses 1 through 3. This section is about Melchizedek, that priest-king, I guess you could say, who came out of Jerusalem when Abraham and his men had defeated the people who had come and taken Lot and his family away from Sodom. And Paul here (or whoever the author of Hebrews is), explains who this was. Notice the wording here. Wording is very important.

Hebrews 7:1-3 For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part [a tithe] of all, first being translated "king of righteousness," and then also king of Salem, meaning "king of peace," without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually.

Let us unpack this, unpack the argument that he is making here. It is not an argument that we necessarily would use in these days. But it was an argument that the Jews would make and others who thought like them. And it has been sanctified here in God's Word.

He tells us His name was Melchizedek, which is something we knew. We could read that back in the book of Genesis. And he tells us what His title was, king of Salem. He goes on and says He was a priest as well as a king. It also says that Abraham gave tithes to Him and he said, then, that "something" was king of righteousness. That something was translated as king of righteousness.

To you and me, we might scratch our heads a little bit because we do not know Hebrew. But if we went back and looked at the word Melchizedek or the name Melchizedek, we would know that that name, with the Melchi and Zedek, means king of righteousness. His name tells us exactly who He was. He was the King of righteousness.

And then he says, "being king of Salem." Let us unpack Salem, render it from the Hebrew, and Salem means peace. So this person whom Abraham

gave the tithes to, He was not only the King of righteousness, He was the King of peace, He was Priest of the Most High God, He was King in Jerusalem.

And then he tells us more things about Him that we can find out by their absence from the book of Genesis. He says this person appeared on the scene and He had no mother. There is no genealogy that tells us who this person was. He had no father—no father, no mother—not human father. He was without a genealogy. He just appears on the scene. And it also never tells us when He was born and it never tells us when He died. So He had neither beginning of days nor end of life. But in every point, in every detail, He is like the Son of God.

Let us add up all these things. King of righteousness, King of peace, King of Jerusalem. Abraham, the greatest among all the Israelites, gave Him tithes. He had no mother or father (of human origin), and He was eternal. Who is this person we are talking about? Who else could it be but the One who became Jesus Christ.

So we have this little vignette way, way back in the book of Genesis that says that this person, who was the Priest of the Most High God, was God Himself, a God being, because only the God beings are without beginning of days, nor end of life. Even the angels had a beginning of days, but not this One. This One was special and who else but God Himself could be called the King of righteousness and the King of peace.

There is more, obviously. Let us go to John the first chapter. We all know what John wrote there to start his book because this was an important point that he had to make sure that his readers understood that we are dealing in the gospel with Somebody much greater than a mere man. So he opens up this way.

John 1:1-2 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, . . .

I could have come here a few minutes ago, right? But we are stacking proof and this is one of them. We have already figured out who God made everything through so we know who we are talking about here.

John 1:2-4 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. [*Everything* originates with Him. He is the *arkee* of all matter, all things that were eventually made.] In Him was life [meaning life inherent], and the life was the light of men.

John 1:14 And the Word [the Logos] became 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.

To my thinking there is no other way that these five verses can be read. They all point to the same individual. Jesus, identified as the Word of God, was God and was with God from the beginning. He is saying, "This One we are dealing with in this book has always existed. He's always been." And in Him is self-sustaining life, which He was able to give, not just to the animals—I am saying He did not give the self-sustaining life. He was able to give them life because He Himself has life within Himself. But He was also able to give it to men. And it does not stop with the physical life through the air we breathe and the oxygen going about in our blood, giving us the ability to live. He also is the One who gives spiritual life, as eventually He became our Savior and our Redeemer.

Now we have confirmation that John is speaking of Jesus Christ, if we need it still by now, in Revelation 19. Here, we can see one author is drawing all this together.

Revelation 19:11-13 Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.

Revelation 19:16 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

We all know who this one is, who fits all those titles. It is the one who became Jesus Christ, who lived a pure life and died as a sacrifice for sin; who was buried and rose again after three days; who ascended to heaven and sits in glory at the side of God the Father.

In I John 1:1-2, the same apostle who wrote this and the gospel, called Him the Word of Life, kind of drawing all these things together, which he calls "that eternal life, which was with the Father." Just verse upon verse upon verse, telling us that this One that is the Christ is the One who has lived with the Father forever. So the Word of God obviously is none other than Jesus Christ.

Revelation 1:8 [He says Himself] "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

What is He saying there? Again, put your Hebrew cap on and think about what He is saying here, tying the old and the new together. He says, "Yeah, I've been around forever and I will be there to infinity." And then He says, without having to say it in so many words, "I'm the one who told Moses My name, the I AM, the One who is and who was and who is to come. I am the One whom Abraham called the Almighty God."

So just level upon level of proof that this One who is Jesus Christ was the One who was interacting throughout the whole Old Testament with His people. There is so much that I could go to. Let us go to verse 18. He says,

Revelation 1:18 "I am He who lives [that is a perfect name for Him, the ever-living one], and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death."

What is He saying here? Just what He said in verse 8, the same things He is telling us. And He adds further proof that, "Yeah, I was the One who was alive before and I came to earth and I died," He is saying," and "Look, I'm

alive again!" That is the same One who lived and interacted with the Israelites back in the Old Testament. And He says, "Because of that, living forever, coming as a human and dying and living again, I not only live forevermore but I have the key to the grave and to death itself. I can defeat them."

How about some more? I like piling on the proof, so let us go back to the book of John to see all the phrases and the verses that help us to see what is going on here.

John 1:18 No one has seen God at any time.

Let us just stop right there and remember something from the Old Testament. The people in the Old Testament were terrified of seeing God, even having God close to them. I am speaking of the Israelites at this point at Mount Sinai, they were trembling. Even Moses said, "I'm exceedingly afraid and tremble," when God was coming down on Mount Sinai. And there was all the smoke and the trumpet blasts and all the stuff that was going on, the earthquakes, and what have you.

People were terrified of seeing God. When the angel of the Lord came to Manoah and his wife, they were afraid that they had seen God and they would die. No one can look upon God and live.

But it says plainly right here in John 1:18,

John 1:18 The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.

Now, how could He declare Him if He had not seen Him and knew Him? He is telling us here that Jesus, among all human beings, had actually seen God. Now, had He seen God during His human life? We have no record of it. But when had He seen God? Throughout all eternity past! They have been working together, They were "best buds," as it were, for all that time and when Jesus came down to earth, He ultimately remembered all of those things and He was able, then, to tell us, tell His disciples who wrote it down for us, what the Father is like because He had seen Him. He knew Him. No one else was able to do that but Him.

How about let us go to John 3, verses 12 and 13 here.

John 3:12-13 "If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven."

A parenthetical phrase there put in by the author to tell us this is the One who not only came down from heaven, but He ascended back into heaven and He is there now.

Let us read verses 31 and 32. This is John the Baptist speaking about Jesus Christ.

John 3:31-32 "He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony."

What is John and what is John the Baptist telling us here? He is telling us that the reason He knew heavenly things is because He had seen them and heard them all firsthand in *heaven* before He came down as a man. That is the only reason why He was so fluent with all of it because He had known it forever. He had seen all these things in heaven and He said, "Father, I'm going to go down there and I'm going to tell them all these things that I've seen and heard so that they know what You're like." And He said, "Okay, great. That's what You're going to do. You're going to declare the Father." Because up until this point, He was very much unknown.

But He was able to do all these things, that is, teach the Father and heavenly things because He had learned them in heaven. And when He came down, He remembered those things and taught them to us in earthly terms so that we could understand them.

Beyond this, we have Jesus Christ's own witness. And I am going to, from this point on basically, tell you what Jesus Himself declared about Himself so that we can understand that He taught this openly, so we should have no

doubts whatsoever that He is who He says He is. So let us go to Luke 10, verse 18. It is amazing, once you start looking for this, how often it appears. We will start in verse 17 so you can get the context here. He had sent the 70 out and He had given them power and said, "Okay, go out and preach the gospel and you can heal and cast out demons, etc."

Luke 10:17-20 Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." And He said to them [this is the oddest thing, after they are so happy that they had all this power and were able to do all these things, and He just says], "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven." [What a strange reply to their joy. Have you ever thought about that? Why He said that?] Behold, I give you authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven."

What was He telling them? Why did He reply so strangely to this declaration of their joy that they had been able to do all these things in His name? Now, there are some, you can find this in a lot of commentaries if you look at it, that try to say that He did not mean this literally, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven." People who are earthly, as John the Baptist said, try to find all kinds of excuses and justifications to argue that Jesus meant something else because they do not want to believe what He actually said here, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven." It is a simple declarative sentence, no frills, just "I saw him fall like lightning from heaven."

What they try to say, a lot of these commentators, is they say He is trying to make it kind of a metaphor for them. That is, that every time a demon is cast out, it is like Satan falling from heaven. So they kind of spiritualize it in one way or another and just say that He was saying something hyperbolic so that they would understand that this power that He had given them is kind of like Satan falling from heaven. It has the same effect.

However, the plain sense of Jesus' words here are that He had really, literally seen Satan fall like lightning from heaven. It is very clear, it is very declarative; that is the word I used before. He is telling us that He was

witness to and very active in the casting out of Satan the Devil from heaven once he had rebelled against God; what we see back there in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28. He saying, "I was there, I saw him fall like lightning from heaven."

Now, why did He say that? We still have not answered the question of why He would say this when the disciples came back so ecstatic about this power.

Well, Jesus was teaching them something. He was actually encouraging them. He was telling them in a broad sense, to broaden your perspective here. I gave you power to cast out demons, to heal the sick, to preach the gospel. Do you know that that same power cast down Satan from heaven like lightning? You get what He is telling them? He is saying you have had a little taste of the power of God and it cured a little disease here. It helped somebody, you know, feel a little bit less infirm there. It cast out this minor demon from this person or that person. But that power that is behind what I gave you is able to cast Satan the Devil out of heaven.

Do you realize the vastness and the *might* of that power that you have been given? You guys were happy about a little bit of power? Do you realize I have the power of the universe to give you, to help you to do the work? However you want to put it. You had a small taste of power, real godly, divine power and it makes you very happy. But this power is able to do the greatest things in the universe. It is there.

What was He doing? He was building their faith. If you have been faithful in little, you will be faithful in much. So if I open the spigot real wide, you will use it for the same good purposes—defeating Satan. That is a pretty good purpose to use the power of God for! It is at your disposal. That is what He was telling them. That is why He goes on to say, "Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you." Do not fear! You have the power go out and use it because I was there when Satan fell like lightning from heaven. I did it! I cast him out. And so if you want to use the power of God and do it in the right way, I can open up the floodgates for you.

He was also telling them, do not mess with Me because He was who He was. He was the Great God over all things under the Father.

And then He warns them, (verse 20) "Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven." That is what you should really be happy about. Not that you have power over things, but that God recognizes you and you are written in the Book of Life. That is what you should have real joy in. In other words, the relationship with the Father and with the Son, that is where real power lies anyway. It is not the using of all this divine power to defeat the enemies. It is that we have that close one-on-one relationship with our God.

So even though this is an illustration, a little vignette, a little two minute vignette in the life of Jesus Christ, it is a proof that He was there, if you take it literally, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven." You believe Jesus Christ? Well, you have to believe then that He was actually there.

Let us go to John the sixth chapter. There is a lot of little things like that that maybe we just kind of fly past when we are reading. We do not think about them quite as much as we should. But when we sit down and really try to imagine what was going on and what Christ was trying to say, it just illuminates things so much about Christ and what was actually happening at the time.

John 6:45 [We go through this every year at Passover] "It is written in the prophets, . . .

This is just after He said, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day." Then He goes on. We often do not go on, we just stop at 44 and we do not go on to explain what He is saying here in verse 45.

John 6:45-46 "It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me. Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father."

Now we get it positively from Jesus Christ's own lips that He had seen the Father. So this is His claim here. And of course, He could only have done this in His preexistent state because no one who was fleshly could see the Father and live.

Do you see what He is saying here? "It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall be taught by God,' meaning those who are called. What is He talking about here? This is one of the statements that most people do not pick up on where He calls Himself God, because He puts it all kind of in the third person. But when this prophecy was made in the prophets, in Isaiah 54, they shall be taught by God, it is speaking about a future occurrence, so He is just quoting the scripture.

But what He is saying is "I'm the one that's teaching you. And if I am teaching you and you have been called by the Father and brought to Me, what does that make Me? God." And then he backs it up by saying, "Hey, I saw the Father, and only a God being could see the Father." So not maybe as dramatic and glamorous as what we just saw in Luke the 10th chapter. But it proves just as well what He is trying to say, that He is God. He is not just some ordinary man who suddenly found God and somehow was infused by some spirit or whatever and He is preaching God. No, this One is the One who is God and who is prophesized to teach God's people.

So we look at verse 46 where He says He has seen God. This makes us stop and think. Really? Did He do that? Now, as C.S. Lewis said years ago, "Either these are the statements of the true God or He is a madman and we have no Savior." Which side are we going to come down upon? That He was just some crazy Jewish peasant who had some really good ideas that a lot of people in this world have agreed with, or is He really the true God? Did He really see God the Father in heaven and come down and report what He saw to us? Which are you going to agree to? Which one are you going to accept? There is no other way around it. You cannot have it both ways. We have to decide. Are we going to listen to Him and agree with Him or are we going to reject Him? I say that we listen to Him.

A couple pages over in John 8, we are going to read verses 52 through 57. Now remember here, Jesus was preaching. He was in the Temple and the

Jews were arguing with Him quite a bit because they had this idea that they were really special and that they were right just about on everything. And this young whippersnapper of a Jew from Nazareth was coming in and talking ideas that were just crazy to them. And if we would go through, we could see where they were not thinking very well themselves. They were saying things that were obviously not true. Like verse 33, "We are Abraham's descendants that have never been in bondage." I mean, that is just flat out and out a lie. I mean, what does that prove anyway? But anyway, we are going to go on and catch this argument later on, as it is about to end.

John 8:52-57 Then the Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon! Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word, he shall never taste death.' [Of course, they are saying here that Abraham and the prophets, they believed God, but they died.] Are you greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? [they emphasize that point] And the prophets are dead. Who do You make Yourself out to be?" [Ah, now we are getting somewhere. They asked Him directly, "Who are You? Who are You trying to make us believe You are?"] Jesus answered, "If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your God. Yet you have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I say, 'I do not know Him,' I shall be a liar like you; but I do know Him and keep His word. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad." Then the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and you have seen Abraham?"

By what Jesus said there about Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad, the Jews realized that what Jesus meant by those words was that He and Abraham had talked to one another and that they had discussed a whole lot of things, particularly that there was a coming Messiah and that He was going to preach to the children of Israel and He was going to save men from their sins. And when Abraham heard that he said, "All right, that's great! Nothing better could happen in this world." That is what He means by, "he rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad"; that was the best news. It was the gospel of the Kingdom of God that Jesus Christ in preexistence in the old Testament had preached to Abraham himself. And Abraham said, "Yeah, I like this! This is great! I'd love to be there when You

did that." That is why they said, "What? That's stupid. You're not even 50 years old and You claim that You talked to Abraham? You are absolutely out of Your skull. That can't be."

And then Jesus hits right between the eyes. His response,

John 8:58 Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly [verily verily, truly truly, this cannot be more clear], I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."

I existed. What He told them was, before Abraham, My name was Yahweh, the I AM. And of course their reaction? They took up stones to throw at Him because He had just proclaimed to them in no uncertain terms, I am your God. I was Abraham's God. He and I were buds. We ate dinner together, we discussed religion together, we discussed the future of this world and all kinds of things. And you should listen to Me. And they rejected Him out of hand.

But here is another instance where He identified Himself clearly as the God of the Old Testament. And of course, the Jews considered this to be blasphemous. So they, instead of thinking this through and making a wise spiritual choice, they instead took up stones and tried to kill Him. But you know, this is not the only time He said this. He said this multiple times, especially here in the book of John. I think that was one of the reasons why John decided to add a fourth gospel. In his own mind his reasons were, these people who are reading the gospels need to know in no uncertain terms, who this Jesus Christ is. He is *God*. So we have places like,

John 8:23 And He said to them, "You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world."

What is He saying? At the very least He is saying He is an angel, but we know better from the other places that He meant that He was God.

This next one is to His own disciples.

John 13:19 "Now I tell you before it comes [to pass], that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am He [notice He is in italics]."

What is He telling them? "I'm telling you now, before it comes to pass, before you really realize what's going on here and why this all is happening and to whom it is happening, that when it does happen, the light bulb is going to go off and you'll really realize that I am God, that I'm the God of the Old Testament whom your fathers had worshipped."

John 18:4-5 [This is at His arrest] Therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them [these were those who were coming to arrest Him], "Whom are you seeking?" And they answered Him, "Jesus of Nazareth." And He said to them, "I am."

Now, you could just say that He was saying, "Oh yeah, that's Me." But that is not how it is written here. He is saying very specifically "I am." And how do we know that that is what He was saying, why He was identifying as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, of Moses, and all the children of Israel throughout history? Notice verse 6.

John 18:6 Then when He said to them, "I am," they drew back and fell to the ground.

There is *power* in that name. Now, if He was just saying, "Oh, that's Me," that would not have the same effect as the name of God. He sent it out from Him with some force, with some power, enough that it made all those who were coming to grab a hold of Him and arrest Him fall back. It was the voice of God saying, "I am! Don't you realize who you are arresting and leading to His death?" It is like a warning and a witness to make them make sure they knew who He was. And of course they got up from the ground and arrested Him.

Now, we went to these specifically, but in the book of John there are multiple places; and not just in the book of John, but especially in John where He says things with this phrase, "I am." I am the bread of life; I am the door; I am the resurrection in the life; I am the way, the truth, and the life; I am the good shepherd; I am the true vine; I am the light of the world. All of these connected to the name Yahweh, I am.

You know that is done in the Old Testament too? When God says that He is the healer, He uses the "I am" and this word healer. When He says that He is their shield, it is Yahweh and the Hebrew word for shield. When it is the rock or whatever it happens to be, it is always attached to the name Yahweh. That is what He is telling them. I am the same one that in the Old Testament, in previous times of history of the children of Israel, that revealed Himself in this way. And He, in the book of John, revealed Himself in the same way to His disciples.

All of these "I am" sayings point to His divinity and to His preexistence as the God of the Old Testament because only God can fulfill these titles. A man cannot be the bread of life. A man cannot be the good shepherd. He could be *a* good shepherd but not *the* good shepherd. A man cannot be the true vine. A man cannot be the light of the world, and we could go on and on.

Now, notice this one here in John 10, verse 30. This one should have gotten Him killed. And it did, actually.

John 10:29-30 "My Father, who has given them to Me [meaning the sheep], is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. [But here is the bombshell.] I and My Father are one."

That must have just killed them. And of course,

John 10:31 Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him.

He had just revealed to them the unity of the divine nature and equated Himself with the Father in such a unambiguous statement that they knew exactly what He was talking about. You could call verse 30 the New

Testament reiteration of the Shema in Deuteronomy 6:4, "The Lord is one!" And He says that needs a little modification because you did not understand it the first time. "I and My Father are one, we are united in what we do. If you see Me," He tells His disciples a little bit later on, "you have seen the Father because we are that unified. But we are two different persons."

Here is a kind of a sobering one, a poignant one. Let us go back to Matthew the 23rd chapter (we are almost done here), verse 37. This is after He had told the Pharisees and the scribes just how evil they are. Then he says,

Matthew 23:37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!"

Jesus was clearly referring to the very tragic history of Israel and Judah. And at this point in His life, very near to the end of His life, He was reminiscing about all those times, about His people, and we need to realize that He was thinking of them as the Lord who brought Israel out of Egypt and into the Promised Land, who had been trekking across the wilderness with them for 40 years, the One who made them a nation and tried to guide them through His prophets and kings and judges for many centuries.

But all we need to do is have a cursory understanding of what is written in the Old Testament to know that they were so very rarely willing to listen to God's counsel. And instead they turned to foreign nations and idols and God was bound by His covenant to do all those things that are written in the law, all those curses. And He was saying here, a very personal and emotional reaction, illustrates that His experience with them were actual, they were real. He was remembering real memories, not just ones He had picked up in the Scriptures by reading them, but because He had experienced them. It was the same person and He was emoting here because they were like His kids and they never listened and their lives ended up so tragically. He is saying here for anyone who heard Him, that He was that God, that God of the Old Testament.

One last one from the apostle Paul. We will just throw this one in as an extra.

I Corinthians 10:1-4 [he says] Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.

That is pretty unambiguous too. The same Being who spent all that time with the children of Israel in the wilderness is the same one who gave Himself as our Savior for sins, Jesus Christ.

Let us finally go to Revelation 22. He ends the Book with the self-identification.

Revelation 22:13 [He says] "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last."

Revelation 22:16 "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the Bright and Morning Star."

He does not want to end the Book without saying one more time that I, Jesus Christ, am the Ever-Living one, the One who was there as the Creator from the beginning, the One who is the God of the Old Testament. He identifies Himself here with titles that only God can have.

And we have probably seen enough proof in about an hour here. This has been basic, something we already know and believe. But it is good to review these things every now and then to reaffirm our beliefs. And also, because there are still people affiliated with the church of God who come up with ideas that say that He was not the God of the Old Testament. I hope this was a good review and helped to convict you of these things more and more and also to open your eyes a little bit to all the ways that He identifies Himself as the God of the Old Testament.

But I want to finish in Matthew 16.

Matthew 16:13-17 When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi. He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." And He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" [After we have had these experiences together, who do you say? What has your conclusion been about who I am?] And Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ [the Messiah], the son of the living God." And Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven."

We do not often think that this is something really hard to understand. But Jesus says here that it *is* a very hard thing to understand *if* you follow your human nature and do not have the Spirit of God revealing these things to you. It is easy to intellectually say that Jesus Christ is the God of the Old Testament. I think what Jesus is getting at here is that this has been revealed to you in a depth and for a reason far beyond just intellectual acceptance. Do you really believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God? Do you believe in that power that we talked about, that He is willing to give us as we saw in Luke 10? Do you believe that He can save you from your sins? Do you really believe that as God, and as now our High Priest, that He can bring you to salvation and eternal life?

See, it is not just enough to say, "Yeah, I think Jesus was the God of the Old Testament." We have got to let that idea, that teaching, guide us and make us submit to this One who is the Eternal. Because only then will we show God that we really believe this: that He is the God of the Old Testament.