

WAS THE ARCHANGEL MICHAEL THE AGENT OF THE GENESIS CREATION?

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(A JW teaching, therefore New World Translation used)

THE UNBIBLICAL IDEA OF A PERSONAL AGENT OF THE GENESIS CREATION

The concept that Jesus Christ had a preexistence has been believed by many since the Christian philosopher Justin Martyr first used the word 'preexistence' with reference to Jesus in about 150 AD. However, Justin was a believer in the idea that Socrates and Plato were inspired by God. Justin had been thoroughly schooled in the Greek philosophical thinking of his day, which he began to apply in his interpretation of the Christian scriptures. When coming into contact with the ideas of Middle Platonic philosopher Numenius, Justin's mind was readily receptive.

The idea of preexistence originated with PLATO, was developed by XENOCRATES (d. 314 BC)

In time NUMENIUS introduced the idea of a **2nd transcendental entity** between the Supreme Being and the universe. This is the **Demiurge** who is subordinate to the Supreme God and acted as agent of creation.

JUSTIN'S background of Greek philosophical schooling attracted him to Numenius' teaching, which he, Justin, adopted and adapted in his reinterpretation of the Christian scriptures.

JUSTIN applied the Demiurge concept **to Jesus** and spoke of him as an "arithmetically second God". This was the first major step away from biblical Christianity. To accomplish this Justin inaccurately quoted and even modified scripture. He also held that Jesus only came **through** Mary not **from** her as in Matthew.

Catholic theologian Karl-Josef Kuschel makes the comment on this that:

"The Christology of **Jewish Christianity**, which had been dominant for decades and **knew of no preexistence** Christology, was increasingly swept aside and was finally branded heretical" (*Born Before All Time*, p. 392).

From the earlier perspective the Apostle Paul had said as recorded in 2 Tim 4:3, 4, ESV: "They will...wander off into myths." This pagan Greek teaching was further developed by the Gnostics who already taught that Jesus was not a human but a spirit being. This was the very problem that the Apostle John dealt with in his first two letters.

*JWs make this connection: Michael (only-begotten Son) divested himself and came to be in Mary's womb and was born **as Jesus** fully human. JWs reference Gen 1:26; Micah 5:2; Prov 8:22, 30 to prove their point from OT.*

NO SCRIPTURE MENTIONS ANY PERSONAL AGENT OF THE GENESIS CREATION

WT teaches that Jesus was not a Co-Creator but an agent of creation. Jehovah was the architect.

ACCORDING TO JEHOVAH

Isa 44:24 "I Jehovah am doing everything, stretching out the heavens **by myself**, laying out the earth. Who was with me?" ('**all alone**' - NASB, ESV, NKJ, REB)

Isa 45:12 "**I myself** have made the earth and have created man upon it I - **my own hands** have stretched out the heavens"

Isa 48:13 "**My own hand** laid the foundation of the earth, and **my own right hand** extended out the heavens."

Isa 66:1 "Now all these things **my own hand** has made"

ACCORDING TO HEBREW SCRIPTURE WRITERS

Gen 1:7, 16, 21, 25, 27 "And **God** proceeded **to make** the expanse, the two great luminaries, the great sea monsters, the wild beast etc." "And **God** proceeded to **create** the man."

Gen 2:3 "God...has been resting from all **his** work that God has created"

Job 9:8 "Stretching out the heavens **by himself**"

Isa 45:18 "Jehovah the Creator of the heavens...the **Former** of the earth and the Maker of it"

ACCORDING TO JESUS

Matt 19:4 "**He** who created them from the beginning."

Mark 13:19 "the creation which **God** created."

If Jesus had been the agent of the Genesis creation he gave no hint of this in spite of having many opportunities to do so. Could humility have been the reason? He was still humble although he revealed that he was their Messiah, Son of Man and Son of God.

ACCORDING TO PAUL

Acts 14:15 "**God** made the heaven and the earth and all things."

Acts 17:24-26 "the **God** that made the world and all the things in it."

Heb 2:7b "have appointed him (Jesus) over the works of **Your** (God's) hands"

Heb 4:3, 4 "**God** rested from all His work."

ACCORDING TO HEAVENLY BEINGS

Rev 4:11 "**You** created all things; because of your will they were created and existed."

Rev 10:6 "**The one** who created heaven and earth and all the things in it."

Because all these statements are completely personal to Jehovah it is impossible to imply that He is only the architect and that a personal agent did all the actual work, especially in view of the statement that 'God rested' after the creation work, not anyone else.

GOD USED HIS WORD/WISDOM/POWER/SPIRIT FOR THE GENESIS CREATION.

Gen 1:3 "God proceeded to **say**: Let..."

Job 33:4 "God's own **spirit** made me."

Psalms 33:6 "By the **word** of Jehovah the heavens were made."

Jer. 10:12 "He is the maker of the earth by **His power**, by **His wisdom**."

2 Pet 3:5 "the earth was formed...by the **word** of God."

Why would God need a personal agent? This smacks of the Demiurge concept.

WHAT ABOUT GENESIS 1:26: "LET US MAKE MAN IN OUR IMAGE"?

Gen 1:27 "And **God** proceeded to create the man in His image."

Therefore, no archangel was used to create mankind.

1. THE PLURAL OF DELIBERATION

This is when the speaker is conferring or consulting with himself. (With God this may be a consulting with His wisdom as in Prov 8.)

Gen 3:22 "the man has become like one of US, knowing good and bad."

Gen 11:7 "Come now! Let US go down and there confuse their language."

(18:21 says 'I will go down')

Isa 6:8 "Whom shall I send, and who will go for US?"

Most modern interpreters take this explanation. The question is: Does God talk to himself?

2. THE PLURAL OF EXCELLENCE/MAJESTY

This is the use of a Hebrew idiomatic mode of expression.

see *Insight on the Scriptures*, Vol. 1, p. 968, e.g. elohim plural in form but singular in meaning

Examples of the royal 'We'

1 Kings 12:8 "that WE may reply to this people." Rehoboam
Ezra 4:18 "document that you have sent US has been read before me." Artaxerxes
Jer 38:16 "Jehovah...made for US this soul..." Zedekiah
John 3:11 "What WE know WE speak and what WE have seen..." Jesus

NOTE: These 2 approaches, if correct, would preclude the JW view that a 2nd person was spoken to and therefore destroy their argument that Michael was the agent of creation.

3. TO GOD'S HEAVENLY COURT OF ANGELS

Job 1:6 "the sons of God entered to take their station before Jehovah"
Ps 82:1 "God has taken his place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods he holds judgment" ESV
Job 38:4, 7 "when I founded the earth...**the morning stars** joyfully cried out. And all the **sons of God** shouted for joy"

If this is the case, then Jehovah would also have been speaking to Michael; but that does not in any way mean that he was speaking to Jesus whose coming into existence is in Mary's womb. An honest examination of the NT texts used by JW's to link Michael to Jesus can be shown to be without substance. But that would be the material of another talk.

THE PORTRAIT OF THE MESSIAH IN THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES

But doesn't MICAH 5:2 show that the Messiah would exist before the beginning of the world?

"And you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, the one too little to get to be among the thousands of Judah, from you there will come out to me the one who is to become **ruler in Israel**, whose origin (goings forth) is **from early times**, from the **days of time indefinite**."
(*'ancient days'*) *Hebrew interlinear, NAB, ESV, NRSV, ROTH, REB, and NIV*

Firstly it must be noted that in Micah 7:20 we see that a similar phrase is used to point back, not beyond the world's creation, but only as far as the Hebrew forefathers: "the loving-kindness given to Abraham, which you swore to our forefathers from **days of long ago**."

Amos 9:11 "In that day I shall raise up the booth of **David** that is fallen...I shall build it up as in the **days of long ago**."

The New American Bible study notes explain Micah 5:2 as a reference to the Messiah's descent from the ancient Davidic dynasty:

"The tiny city and clan of Bethlehem-Ephrathah, from which comes the ancient Davidic dynasty (whose origin is from old, from ancient times) with its messianic king, one who is to be ruler in Israel".

Additionally, the *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges* says: "origins" in Micah 5:2 refers to his (the Messiah's) descent from the ancient Davidic family.

If 'origin' in Micah 5:2 referred to Jesus' coming into existence it would be in contradiction of Matt 1:18 which details the 'origin' of Jesus as his birth. One cannot have two points of origin.

Referring to Micah 5:2, James Dunn, Professor of Divinity at Durham University, comments that "The Hebrew does not suggest preexistence" (*Christology in the Making*, p. 71).

Likely, it is the words of Micah 5:2 that the first century Jews had in mind when they said: "Has not scripture said that **the Christ** is coming **from the offspring of David**, and **from**

Bethlehem the village where David used to be?" John 7:42

Therefore the Messiah, being the final one of the Davidic dynasty, is part of and from within a dynasty that is ancient, which thereby makes the Messiah's origin ancient. In the context it would be incorrect to assume that this meant that the Messiah existed before the world's creation.

Similarly, in trying to assess who Jesus is: "Some of the crowd...began saying: 'This is for certainty **the prophet**'. Others were saying: 'This is **the Christ**'" John 7:40, 41

And when asked by Jesus: "Who are men saying the Son of Man is?" They (the disciples) said: 'Some say **John the Baptist**, others **Elijah**, still others **Jeremiah** or **one of the prophets**.'" Matt 16:13, 14

Nathaniel's recognition of who Jesus was: "Rabbi, you are the **Son of God**, you are **king of Israel**" John 1:49

In no case does anyone suggest that Jesus may have been an archangel.

WHAT ABOUT PROVERBS 8:22, 23, 24 and 30?

In these texts God's wisdom is wrongly taken by JW's as a person who acted as agent of creation. Hence wisdom is personalised rather than correctly viewed as PERSONIFICATION. Personification is a figure of speech whereby something such as an inanimate object or an abstract idea, e.g. a quality, is given animated (human or animal) characteristics

So in Proverbs God's wisdom becomes Lady Wisdom. Personification never involves a literal person.

8:22, 23: "Jehovah himself produced me as the beginning of his way, the earliest of his achievements of long ago. From time indefinite I was installed, from the start, from times earlier than the earth"

word for word from the Heb: "he-possessed-me...from-eternity ('*oh.lam= antiquity, ancient time, days of old. BDB p. 761 1a*).

*Proverbs 1:20, 21; 2:2-4; 3:13-18; 8:1-21; 8:22-36; 9:1-5 all PERSONIFY wisdom by using the pronouns **she** and **her** in all Bible translations, the Hebrew interlinear and the LXX.*

However, the NWT translates these pronouns as it and its; yet the personification is still obvious throughout these chapters because of the use of the pronouns I and me.

Insight on the Scriptures, on the subject of SPIRIT under the subheading Personification does not prove personality, says:

"However, it is not unusual in the scriptures for **something that is not actually a person** to be personalized or personified. **Wisdom is personified** in the book of Proverbs (1:20-33; **8:1-36**); and feminine pronominal forms are used of it in the original Hebrew" (Volume 2, p. 1019).

The feminine gender of 'wisdom' ('hokma' Heb and 'Sophia' Gk) does not bear on our study.

*Verse 24 speaks of wisdom being 'brought forth as with labour pains'. This would be the case because we are dealing with personification. Lady wisdom, as the figure of speech, would have been born at a point in time. This in no way implies that Jehovah's actual wisdom came into existence. It was always with Him. However, **the specific wisdom that is God's purpose and plan, i.e. His 'word,'** was produced at a particular point in ancient time.*

Nevertheless, Jesus was not "brought forth as with labour pains" until his birth from Mary. Therefore, Jesus is not in this picture of wisdom in Proverbs. Yet, Jesus does become the embodiment of God's wisdom after his birth. 1Cor 1:24; Col 2:3

1Cor 1:30 "Christ Jesus, who **has become** to us wisdom from God"

Luke 1:52 "Jesus went on progressing in wisdom"

"There is no clear indication that the wisdom language of these writings has gone beyond vivid personification" (Professor James Dunn, *Christology in the Making*, p. 170).

8:30 " then I came to be beside him as **a master worker**, and I came to be the one he was

especially fond of day by day."

*There is no disconnection between 8:21 and 8:22 .The word **me** connects both verses. So it is still Lady Wisdom speaking and therefore, **the master worker** of vs 30 is also **her**.*

Catholic theologian Karl-Josef Kuschel states:

"Nor is there any tradition that Lady Wisdom was ever misunderstood in Israel as a 'real' goddess appearing alongside Yahweh...If we look at the texts closely, wisdom in Proverbs 8, as throughout the Hebrew canon, is not an intermediate or middle being" (*Born Before All Time*, p. 194).

Right within this passage are contained statements that Jehovah was the actual maker of the Genesis creation:

Prov 8:26, 29 "When as yet **He** had not **made the earth**. When **He** established (not 'prepared') the heavens. When **He** inscribed (not 'decreed') a circle on the face of the watery deep. **He** made firm the cloud masses. **He** marked out (not 'decreed') the foundations of the earth"

It is the context and the proper understanding of language that help one to properly understand this section of Proverbs which is evidently not speaking of a literal person.

JESUS NEVER WAS AN ARCHANGEL

An archangel is nevertheless an angel but of higher rank. So Michael is indeed of the category of 'angel'. He is one of several archangels according to Daniel 10:13: "Michael, **one** of the foremost (chief) Princes".

In fact, it was a common Jewish belief that there were seven named archangels, each acting as chief over their own body of angels. At least by Jesus' time angels had been granted immortality.

Luke 20:36 "**neither** can they **die** anymore, for they are like the angels."

How could an immortal Michael, an angel, become a mortal human and die on the torture stake?

Heb 1:4 "So he **has become** better than the *angels*, as he **has inherited** a more excellent name than they."

Heb 1:5 "to which one of the angels did he say..." *Therefore the things said to the Son were not said to Michael --- an angel.*

Heb 1:7, 8 "with reference to the angels...*contrasted with*...but with reference to the Son."

Heb 2:5-7 "For it is **not to angels** that He has subjected the inhabited earth to come...What is man...or the **Son of Man**...You have **appointed him** over the works of Your hands; You have put all things **in subjection** under **his** feet"

Michael being in the category of angel is, therefore, not Jesus.

If the author of Hebrews thought that Jesus is the archangel why does he labour to prove that he is superior to angels, to Moses, to Joshua and to Levi? All he need say is that Jesus is the archangel.

*So was Jesus, as he walked the earth, actually Michael? If we answer 'yes' we have an immortal archangel teaching the disciples and being murdered. If we answer 'no' then Michael just disappeared. If we answer that **Michael's essence was genetically combined with Mary's egg** then we have a hybrid. He is no longer Michael (similar to a Nephilim, the product of angelic/human sexual union, Gen 6:1-4 and therefore not a genuine human). He would be neither human nor angel and could not be the 2nd Adam (1Cor 15:45-49); yet Jesus called himself '**Son of Man**,' meaning 'human being'.*

THIS RAISES THE PROBLEM OF A CONTRADICTION WITHIN WT TEACHING

The concept of the preexistence of Jesus means that he would have had Two Natures, one

human, the other archangel, combined and with one being dominant. Yet WT states that he was fully human.

Catholic writer Thomas Hart comments:

"Christ both divine and human makes genuine humanity impossible...If there are two natures in him, it is clear which will dominate and Jesus becomes immediately very different from us...what kind of temptation is this" (*To Know and Follow Jesus*, p. 46).

Yet the scriptures show that Jesus has a single nature — human.

Heb 2:14 "since the 'young children' are sharers of **blood and flesh** (*mortal human nature*) he also similarly partook of the same things"

Heb 2:17 "he was obliged to become like his brothers **in all respects**"

Heb 4:15 "one who has been tested in all respects like ourselves, but without sin"

Rom 5:14 "of Adam, who is **a type of him** that was to come" note KIT

1Cor 15:45,46 "The last Adam...The first is not that which is spiritual but that which is natural" (soulical, KIT)

Indeed, Adam (the first, which is natural) came into existence before Jesus (that which is spiritual).

*To deal with the problem of two natures Trinitarians teach that 'God the Son' assumed **impersonal human nature** so that Jesus is called **man** in the generic sense but **not 'a man'**.*

***A similar problem arises for** those with the Arian belief (substitute 'God the Son' for 'Archangel'). To deal with this problem they apply the Doctrine of Kenosis based on Philippians 2:7 which is the supposed 'emptying out of the essence and nature of Michael the archangel'. This doctrine does not solve the problem of a dominant archangelic nature. This 1860's ff doctrine is also scripturally unsupportable -- see notes on Philippians 2.*

FOR MICHAEL TO HAVE BECOME JESUS IS ILLOGICAL

What WT teaching regarding Michael means: soul (whole person) = body + spirit.
spirit = **life**, life force or life principle all of which are **impersonal** (*Insight*, vol. 2, p. 246)

1. Only Michael's life was transferred to Mary. (*Insight*, vol. 2, p. 56)

2. Therefore, his life force did not take his person to Mary.

DIVINE SUICIDE 3. His person would have **ceased existence** when his **body and life** were separated.

4. Therefore, a non-person (nothing) would have come from heaven to Mary.

Yet WT maintains that "the child retained identity as the same person who had resided in heaven as the Word...and that he was a genuine descendant of David"

WT elsewhere says that God gave Michael's memories to Jesus and that he recalled his preexistence when God spoke to him at his baptism and said "You are my Son."

Conclusion:

So apart from the many inconsistencies of this teaching we have seen that Gen 1:26, Mic 5:2 and Prov 8:22, 30 cannot legitimately be used to indicate that Jesus, as Michael, could possibly have been the agent of creation. Although I had a great emotional struggle to come finally to see through this WT pagan Greek teaching, what a blessing it is now to have the clear understanding and to be able to focus on Jesus as the agent of the New Creation.