

Philippians Series

Lesson #044

June 1, 2023

Dean Bible Ministries

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The Deity of the Preincarnate Christ

Philippians 2:5–11



Two Fundamental Questions:

Who was Jesus *Before* He Came?

What was Jesus *When* He Came?

We have learned:

- 1. Php. 2:5–11 was written in context to provide an example of humility and serving one another which is stated in Php. 2:1–4.**
- 2. That Christ Jesus preexisted His incarnation as undiminished deity. Php. 2:6**
- 3. At the Incarnation God the Son did not surrender or give up any divine attribute, or anything essential to deity. Such a surrender would not have been possible.**

- 4. God the Son voluntarily restricted the use of His divine attributes to solve the problems, temptations, and challenges He faced in His humanity, and veiled the manifestation of His eternal glory.**
- 5. However, though the visible manifestation of His glory was veiled, the glory of His Person was made manifest through His words and works.**

John 1:14, “And the Word 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.”

Who was Jesus before He came?

Understanding Who God is: Unity and plurality

Did Jesus preexist creation? And if so, is He eternal?

Distinguish preexistence from eternality of Christ

- **Passages which indicate His eternality**
- **Passages in the Old Testament which teach His preexistence**
- **Passages in the New Testament which teach His preexistence**
- **Passages which predict the coming of the Messiah**
- **Passages which indicate His humanity**
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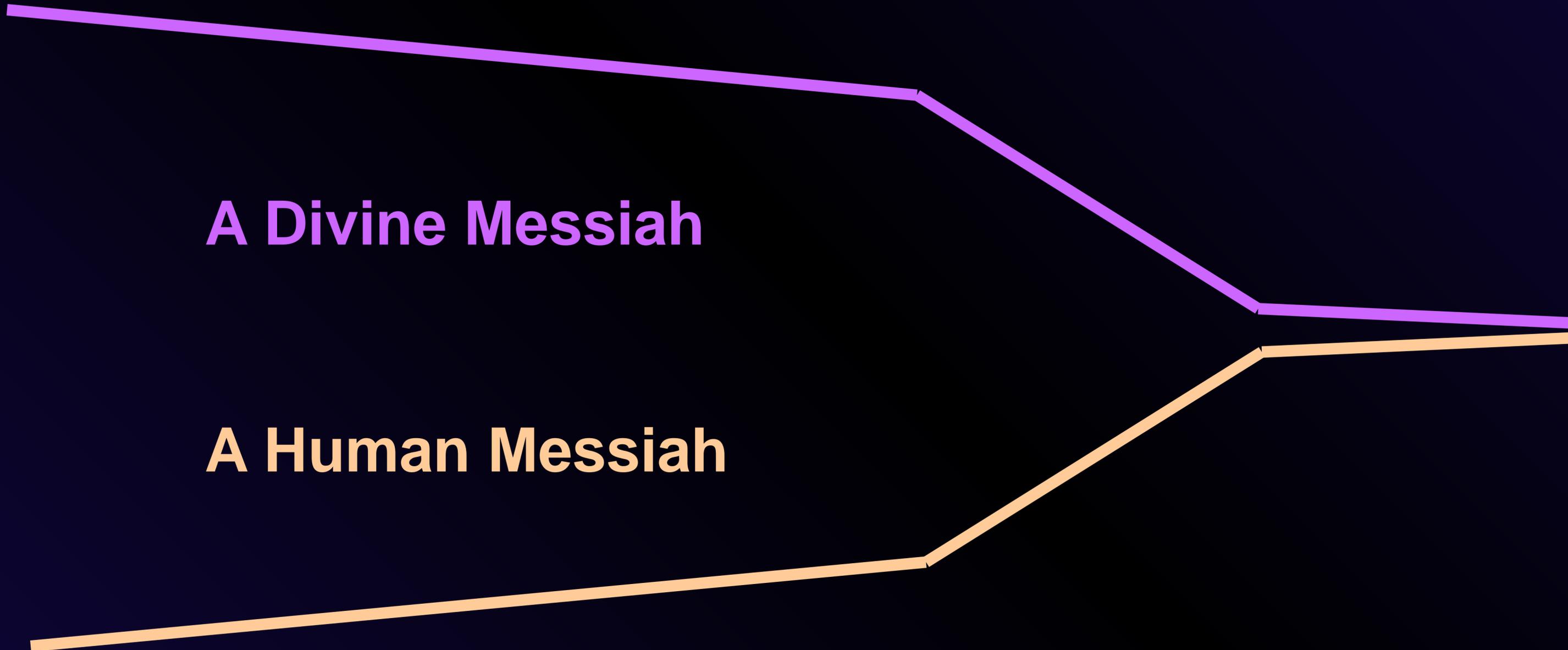
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- **Passages which indicate His eternality**
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Two Streams from the Old Testament Converge in Jesus of Nazareth

A Divine Messiah

A Human Messiah

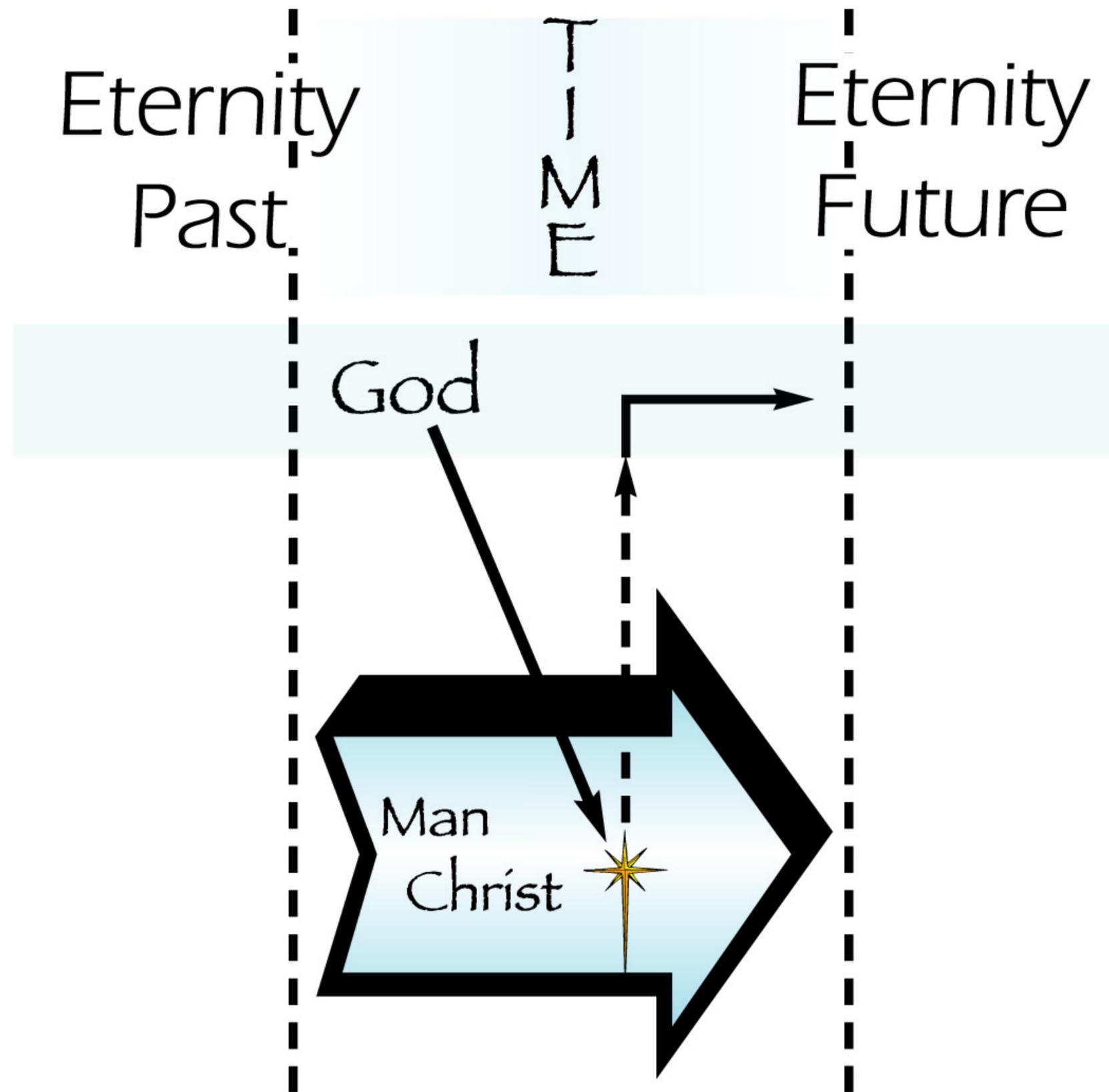


The Plurality

There were basically two options:

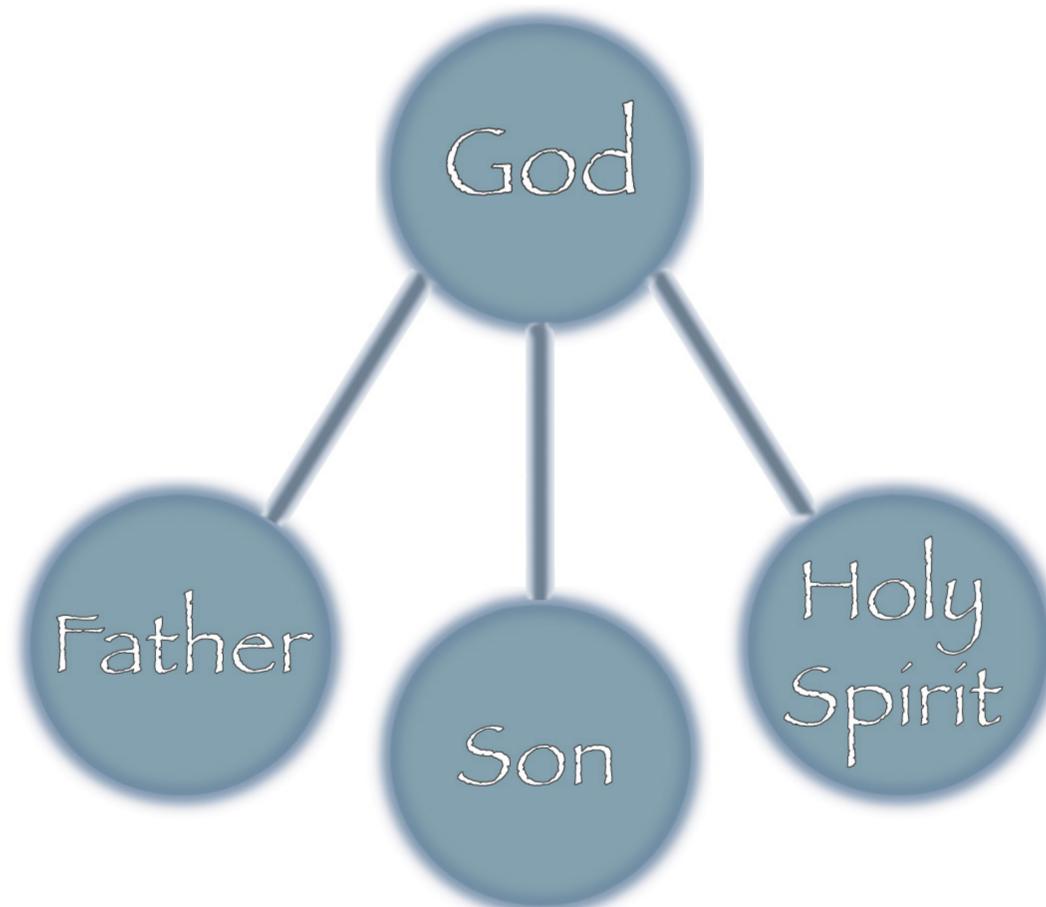
Option 1: Dynamic Monarchianism (or adoptionism), which is the heresy of unitarianism: God the Father infused or imparted deity to Jesus at some time during His life on the earth. This denies the absolute or undiminished deity of Christ saying that Jesus was a human endowed with divine powers.

Adoptionism: An Attempt to Explain Christ

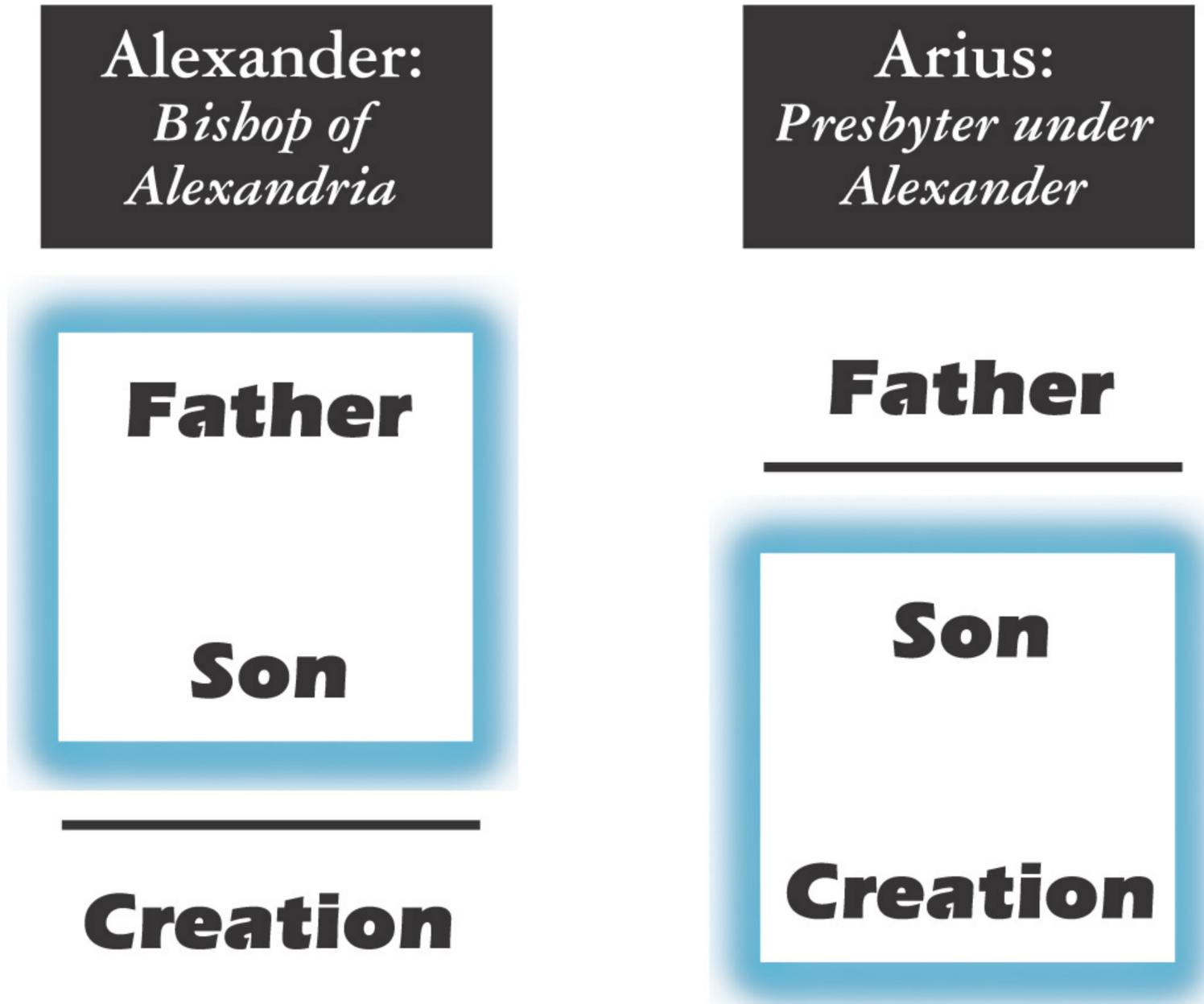


Modalism: The terms “Father,” “Son,” and “Holy Spirit” merely describe different modes that the one God manifests Himself. This heresy does not give the Son or the Holy Spirit independent personhood. God is one in Person and One in Nature, with different ways of appearing.

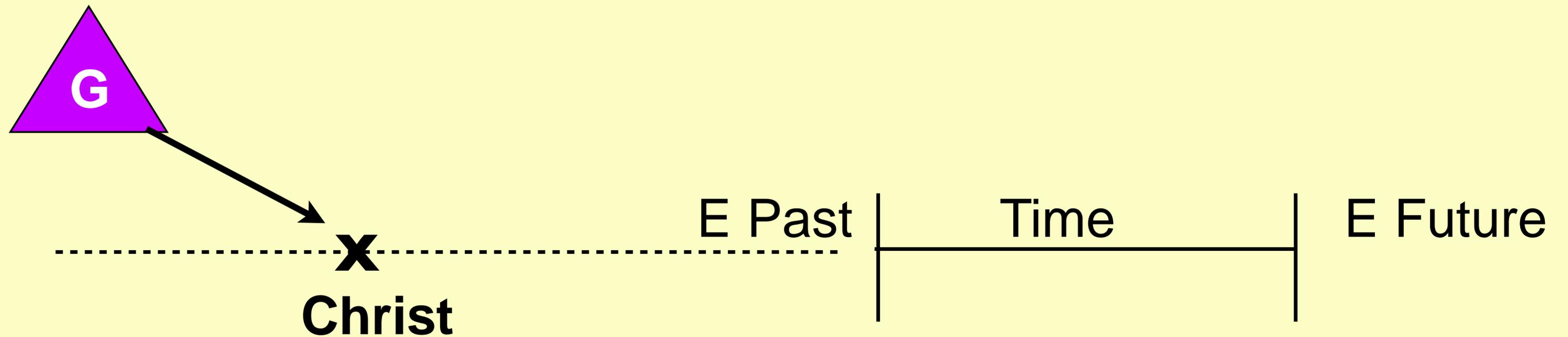
Modalism: An Attempt to Explain Christ



Arianism: The Opponents and the Issue



Arianism: A form of dynamic monarchianism is Arianism, which explained the relation to the Father by saying the Son was created in eternity past. Thus the Son was not full deity.



Biblical Basis for Plurality in the Godhead

Isa. 59:21, “ ‘As for Me,’ says the LORD, ‘this is My covenant with them: My Spirit who is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants, nor from the mouth of your descendants’ descendants,’ says the LORD, ‘from this time and forevermore.’ ”

New Testament Passages on Plurality

Matt. 28:19, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,”

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- **Passages which indicate His humanity**
- **Passages which indicate His deity**

Old Testament Passages on Preexistence

**Isa. 9:6, “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given;
And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His
name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,
Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace.”**

Old Testament Passages on Preexistence

Psa. 2:2, “The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against His Messiah, saying, ...”

Psa. 2:5, “Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, and distress them in His deep displeasure:

Psa. 2:6, “ ‘Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion.’

Psa. 2:7, “ ‘I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, “You are My Son, today I have begotten You.” ’ ”

Old Testament Passages on Preexistence

Mic. 5:2, “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.”

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New Testament Passages on Preexistence

John 1:1, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:2, “He was in the beginning with God.

John 1:3, “All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

John 1:4, “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.”

New Testament Passages on Preexistence

Col. 1:17, “And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.”

Heb. 1:3, “who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,”

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Who Was Jesus in His Preincarnate State?

1. The historic, orthodox answer is that Christ is the eternal Son of God. His relationship is to the Father as the one who is eternally begotten.

“And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten from the Father, only-begotten, that is, from the substance of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father,”

~The Nicene Creed

**Scripture: Heb. 10:7–10; Psa. 40:6–11; John 15:10;
Php. 2:6–8; 1 Cor. 15:23–28**

John 17:5, “And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.”

John 8:58, “Jesus said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.’ ”

John 10:30, “ ‘I and My Father are one.’ ”

John 10:33, “The Jews answered Him, saying, ‘For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God.’ ”

2. *YHWH*, the sacred Tetragrammaton (4 letters), is God's personal name and is applied to the preincarnate Christ, especially as "The Messenger (Angel) of *YHWH*":

Isa. 45:18, "For thus says the LORD (*YHWH*), Who created the heavens, Who is God, Who formed the earth and made it, Who has established it, Who did not create it in vain, Who formed it to be inhabited: 'I am the LORD, and there is no other.' "

3. The Angel (Messenger of *YHWH*) is *YHWH*.

Gen. 16:7, “Now the Angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur.

Gen. 16:8, “And He said, ‘Hagar, Sarai’s maid, where have you come from, and where are you going?’ She said, ‘I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai.’

Gen. 16:9, “The Angel of the LORD said to her, ‘Return to your mistress, and submit yourself under her hand.’

Gen. 16:10, “Then the Angel of the LORD said to her, ‘I will multiply your descendants exceedingly, so that they shall not be counted for multitude.’ ”

3. The Angel (Messenger of *YHWH*) is *YHWH*.

Gen. 16:13, “Then she called the name of *YHWH* who spoke to her, You–Are–the–God–Who–Sees; for she said, ‘Have I also here seen Him who sees me?’ ”

3. The Angel (Messenger of *YHWH*) is *YHWH*.

Gen. 22:1, “Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, ‘Abraham!’ And he said, ‘Here I am.’”

Gen. 22:2, “Then He said, ‘Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.’ ”

3. The Angel (Messenger of *YHWH*) is *YHWH*.

Gen. 22:11, “But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, ‘Abraham, Abraham!’ So he said, ‘Here I am.’

Gen. 22:12, “And He said, ‘Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.’ ”

3. The Angel (Messenger of *YHWH*) is *YHWH*.

Gen. 22:15, “Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven,

Gen. 22:16, “and said: ‘By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son—

Gen. 22:17, “ ‘blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies.

Gen. 22:18, “ ‘In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.’ ”

3. The Angel (Messenger of *YHWH*) is *YHWH*.

Gen. 24:7, “The LORD God of heaven, who took me [Abraham] from my father’s house and from the land of my family, and who spoke to me and swore to me,”

Gen. 24:40, “But he said to me [Eliezer], ‘The LORD, before whom I walk, will send His angel with you and prosper your way; and you shall take a wife for my son from my family and from my father’s house.’ ”

3. The Angel (Messenger of *YHWH*) is *YHWH*.

Ex. 3:2, “And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed.”

3. The Angel (Messenger of *YHWH*) is *YHWH*.

Ex. 3:2, “And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed.”

Ex. 3:14, “And God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM.’ And He said, ‘Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, “I AM has sent me to you.” ’ ”

3. The Angel (Messenger of *YHWH*) is *YHWH*.

Judg. 6:11, “Now the Angel of the LORD came and sat under the terebinth tree which was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress, in order to hide it from the Midianites.

Judg. 6:12, “And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him, and said to him, ‘The LORD is with you, you mighty man of valor!’ ”

3. The Angel (Messenger of *YHWH*) is *YHWH*.

Judg. 6:14, “Then the LORD turned to him and said, ‘Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you?’

Judg. 6:15, “So he said to Him, ‘O my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s house.’

Judg. 6:16, “And the LORD said to him, ‘Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man.’ ”

3. The Angel (Messenger of *YHWH*) is *YHWH*.

Judg. 6:21, “Then the Angel of the LORD put out the end of the staff that was in His hand, and touched the meat and the unleavened bread; and fire rose out of the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. And the Angel of the LORD departed out of his sight.”

Judg. 13:3, “And the Angel of the LORD appeared to the woman and said to her, ‘Indeed now, you are barren and have borne no children, but you shall conceive and bear a son.’ ”

Judg. 13:13, “So the Angel of the LORD said to Manoah, ‘Of all that I said to the woman let her be careful.’ ”

Judg. 13:18, “And the Angel of the LORD said to him, ‘Why do you ask My name, seeing it is Wonderful?’ ”

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**Psa. 31:21, “Blessed *be*
the LORD, for He has
shown me His marvelous
kindness [*chesed*] in a
strong city!”**

Judg. 13:19, “So Manoah took the young goat with the grain offering, and offered it upon the rock to the LORD. And He did a wondrous thing while Manoah and his wife looked on—

Judg. 13:20, “it happened as the flame went up toward heaven from the altar—the Angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar! When Manoah and his wife saw this, they fell on their faces to the ground.”

The Messenger of *YHWH* is distinct from *YHWH*.

Zech. 1:12, “Then the Angel of the LORD answered and said, ‘O LORD of hosts, how long will You not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which You were angry these seventy years?’

Zech. 1:13, “And the LORD answered the angel who talked to me, with good and comforting words.

Zech. 1:14, “So the angel who spoke with me said to me, ‘Proclaim, saying, “Thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘I am zealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with great zeal.’ ” ’ ”

Psa. 110:1, “The LORD said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’ ”

Matt. 22:42, “saying, ‘What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?’ They said to Him, ‘The Son of David.’

Matt. 22:43, “He said to them, ‘How then does David in the Spirit call Him “Lord,” saying:

Matt. 22:44, “ ‘ “The LORD said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool’ ”?

Matt. 22:45, “ ‘If David then calls Him “Lord,” how is He his Son?’ ”

1. The Angel of *YHWH* is the messenger, the spokesperson, of God the Father, the same as Christ in the New Testament.

Isa. 63:7, “I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the LORD and the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD has bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which He has bestowed on them according to His mercies, according to the multitude of His lovingkindnesses.

Isa. 63:8, “For He said, ‘Surely they are My people, children who will not lie.’ So He became their Savior.

Isa. 63:9, “In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His Presence saved them; In His love and in His pity He redeemed them; And He bore them and carried them all the days of old.

Isa. 63:10, “But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit; So He turned Himself against them as an enemy, and He fought against them.”

2. Once Christ was incarnate, there is no more reference to THE Angel of *YHWH* (an angel of *YHWH*, but not THE Angel of *YHWH*).

New Testament Passages

John 1:1, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

John 1:2, “He was in the beginning with God.”

John 1:3, “All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.”

John 1:4, “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.”

John 1:5, “And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.”

John 1:14, “And the Word 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.

John 1:15, “John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, ‘This was He of whom I said, “He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.” ’ ”

The *Memra*

- 1. *Memra* is Aramaic for the Hebrew *davar*, “word,” which is translated *logos* in the New Testament.**

2. *Memra*: Both distinct from God and the same as God.

3. *Memra*: The Agent of creation. God creates by His Word, by His *Memra*.

John 1:3, “All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.”

4. *Memra*: The Agent of salvation.

John 1:11, “He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.

John 1:12, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:”

5. *Memra* was the visible form, the visible expression of God.

John 14:9, “Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, “Show us the Father”?’ ”

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John 1:14, “And the Word became flesh and tabernacled [*skeine*] among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

6. *Memra* was the means by which God signs His covenants.

7. *Memra* was the Agent of revelation.

John 1:18, “No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.”

Who was Jesus when He came?