

## DOES THE BIBLE TEACH PRE-EXISTENCE?

The Bible has an entire book devoted to the subject of beginnings, the book of Genesis. Its very first chapter is God's historical record of our origin and states that mankind began in the Garden of Eden. THAT is where Adam and Eve were alive for the first time.

The New Testament is equally unmistakable. "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. . . . Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual" (1 Corinthians 15:44,46). To suppose that we were spirit before flesh is to reverse the order given by Paul the Apostle. Romans 9:11 is obvious in its teaching that Jacob and Esau did nothing before their birth. Matthew 7:21-23 foretells a judgment scene in which God will say to some "I never knew you." God could not say that if these people had lived in His presence in a pre-existence.

One popular theory of pre-existence is irrefutably of ancient origin. However, its source is not the Bible. Rather, its author is the distinctly non-Christian philosopher, Plato. Colossians 2:8 warns us not to derive our beliefs from the philosophies of men.

Although we know that angels were created before the earth was formed (Job 38:4-7) and that God is able to foresee and preplan elements of our lives (Jeremiah 1:5), there has been only ONE to walk this earth Who ever truly pre-existed. His name is Jesus Christ. He shocked His audience by asserting, "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58). This He said in order to prove that He was and always had been God. This is evident by comparing John 8:58 with Exodus 3:13,14. Those who heard Jesus that day understood His claims but violently rejected Him (John 8:59). Through these scriptures we learn that pre-existence is an exclusive characteristic of God, not a universal experience of mankind.

Far more important than speculating where we were before birth is where we are going. Sensible people want to live with God in eternity, and the Bible tells us how. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). The ONLY way to live with the Father in eternity is total reliance on Christ to give us eternal life, a future existence of which we can be absolutely certain.

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