

Is Christ a Created Being?

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As most of you who have listened to us for any length of time are aware, about five years ago we began speaking a lot more about the role of God the Father, particularly in the Old Testament. Prior to that it was a common church related doctrine to believe that Christ is the God of the Old Testament and every time you see a God being in the Old Testament interacting with a human, it's assumed to be Jesus Christ. I think most all of us believed that for many years as well—I know I certainly did until about five years ago. Again, five years ago we started making a change and focusing more on the role of God the Father and His active role in the Old Testament.

Right around the same time we started doing this, there were a number of allegations that immediately popped up and starting coming in our direction and have ever since. One of the common allegations is, they are demeaning the role of Jesus Christ; they're reducing the value of Who Christ is and making His role nothing. Another common allegation is, they are teaching that Christ is a created being, or just give them time and they will start to teach that Christ is a created being—it's just a matter of time before they start doing that. When this started coming up, I was honestly a bit surprised by it all. I was scratching my head thinking, where are they coming up with this idea that we are saying that Christ is a created being because we have never said any such thing; we've never even hinted at that idea. Why are people jumping to this conclusion? Where is this coming from?

Later, I began to look at the greater context of what Rick likes to refer to as the greater church of God. If you look at it from that broader context, I began to understand why people tend to jump to this conclusion. Let me explain what I mean by that. If you look at not only all the groups, who you might say trace their organizational lineage back through the Worldwide Church of God as we would. Even if you go back to the church of God Seventh Day, which is where Worldwide traces its roots from and look at all the hierarchy of groups that all split off over the years. Those who trace their lineage to that same organization—just look at that whole family of groups and look at any of them who talk much about the role of the Father in the sense that we do; in other words, who would look at the Tetragrammaton (*the Hebrew name of God transliterated in four letters as YHWH or JHVH*). Regardless of how they pronounce the name or what they attribute to that, and say that this is the Father's name and this is always referring to the Father and therefore makes the Father an active player in the Old Testament, what you'll typically find is the majority of all of these groups also still believe some version of the idea that Christ was a created being.

What it also stems from that belief is to teach the idea that Christ isn't really a God Being, He's more along the lines of the top of the angelic hierarchy; that He is a created being, a super angel and not really a God being. So therefore, it's inappropriate to have any form of worship of Him. What you'll find is these are typically clustered together and this is often the perspective of where people are coming from when they say, "Just give them time, they are going to teach Christ is a created being and degrade Christ's role". That's where these assumptions come from.

We have never really said anything along the lines of Christ being a created being but what I would like to do today is to look at this particular subject so we can understand where people are coming from with this whole idea and also make sure we have a proper understanding of Christ as an eternal God being. By the time you are hearing this sermon, a few weeks away is going to be Passover, at a time where we are all looking at the role of Christ and all He did

for us. So I think it's important we have it clear in our minds exactly Who Jesus Christ is and His role. If you would like a title for this sermon, it's:

Is Christ a Created Being?

From my introduction, you already have the spoiler alert. You know which direction I'm going with the title question. But first of all, what I would like to do is start out looking at some of the scriptures that people oftentimes interpret to come up with the idea that Christ is a created being. We are going to explain how to look at these scriptures later in the sermon, but first I would like to get a feel for, how is it that people come to this conclusion and the idea that Christ is created being. To start we will go to Revelation 3:14.

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: (NKJV)*

If you look at the seven churches, you'll see in all these letters they all start with a brief description of the role of Jesus Christ. That's a standard format in all of them. So this statement about the beginning of the creation of God is referring to Christ. The logic of where people interpret this statement is, if He is the beginning of God's creation, then He is the first thing God created. He created Christ and then Christ created everything else. That's the logic of where this is going. That is not a conclusion that I agree with and we'll come back later in this sermon and look at how to understand that statement, but that's the logic of where people come up with that idea that Christ is a created being.

Let's also look at some other statements along this line. Look at Colossians 1:15 and see a similar statement here.

Colossians 1:15 *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. (NKJV)*

This verse is often interpreted very similarly, that if He is the firstborn then He is the firstborn in the family and if you have multiple children, your first one born is your firstborn and that automatically implies parents and a birth date as to when this individual came into this world and started. That's the same logic that is used to support the idea that Christ is a created being. Another common chain of logic to back up this idea is the fact that Christ is oftentimes referred to as the Son of God and the begotten Son of God. If you are a Son that means you have a Father and that you were fathered at some point and by virtue of what begotten means, the whole term is referring to when a sperm connects with an egg and a child results from that, the begotten process. That all implies a starting point. In John 3 look at a very common scripture that makes these statements. They are numerous so we won't look at all of them today.

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

17) For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

18) He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (NKJV)

If you can take the logic here and say, if He is a Son that means He is born at some point and if the Father is Christ's Father and Christ was begotten that means He was created. We're going to come back at the end of this sermon and look particularly at these three scriptures we have just gone through and see how to properly understand them. But you can

kind of understand some of the logic of how people interpret these scriptures to then come to the conclusion that Christ must be a created being. He must have a starting point He can't be eternal.

Let's also look at the fact that there is more than one argument to the idea that Christ is a created being. There's a number of nuances that people argue, related to this subject but in general there are two major theories. One of them is the idea that Christ didn't preexist prior to being born as a human being; that He comes into the world, His existence starts when He was born out of Mary and then later, He becomes a spirit being at the resurrection but He didn't have an existence prior to that—that's the first argument. This one is in my opinion, very hard to defend and very easy to defeat because there are just too many scriptures that directly state that Christ had an existence prior to being born as human being. You have to do some serious mental gymnastics to try and defend this concept. Just to look at a number of scriptures I think we are all familiar with that clearly indicate that Christ existed prior to being a physical human being, first to John 6:60.

John 6:60 *Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?"*

61) *When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, "Does this offend you?"*

62) *What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before?*
(NKJV)

He's referring to ascending to heaven. He's telling them, *"I existed in heaven before I came down here as a human being."* Obviously for that to be true, He had to exist prior to His physical life. There are numerous scriptures that refer to this. Look at John 17 and we'll see another common statement here.

John 17:1 *Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You,*

2) *as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.*

3) *And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.*

4) *I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.*

5) *And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.* (NKJV)

If He was with the Father and had glory before the world was, the only way that that is possible is He has to have existed prior to His physical life. He can't be restored to a glory He never had in the first place. He had to have existed prior to Him being a physical human being for Him to be restored; put back in the role that He had before. There's no other rational way to explain that. He also makes statements as we are about to see that He personally saw Satan's rebellion and him being cast out of heaven and that He knew Abraham. These are things that could not be possible at all if He didn't exist prior to His physical life. Turn to Luke 10:17.

Luke 10:17 *Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name."*

18) *And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven." (NKJV)*

He's not saying that He read about this in the Old Testament or that it was revealed to Him in a vision. He is saying He was around and personally witnessed this; He saw this take place. This was obviously before the account in Genesis picks up in the Garden of Eden so

therefore, He must have existed prior to all of this to have witnessed this event. He also makes the statement that He knew Abraham; in fact, the Jews wanted to stone Him for making this statement.

John 8:48 *Then the Jews answered and said to Him, "Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?"*

49) *Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me.*

50) *And I do not seek My own glory; there is One who seeks and judges.*

51) *Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death."*

52) *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.'*

53) *Are You greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Who do You make Yourself out to be?"*

54) *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.*

55) *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.*

56) *Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad."*

57) *Then the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" (NKJV)*

They realized that He was saying to them that He knew Abraham and they challenged Him on this. Notice His response.

58) *Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."*

59) *Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by. (NKJV)*

They knew immediately that He was claiming to be eternal, He was claiming to have preexisted prior to His physical life, how else could He have known Abraham. That's why they wanted to stone Him. Just as a side point, this particular verse is oftentimes used to claim that Christ is claiming that He is the God at the burning bush speaking to Moses in Exodus 3 and that Yehovah is also Jesus Christ and Christ is therefore the God of the Old Testament. That is an argument that only works in English because it's based upon the English words, "I am". This is a subject all by itself. But if you have questions about that, look on the website. There is a paper entitled the "I AM" and goes through this subject in detail to explain what Christ is really getting at it and the differences in the Greek and Hebrew. Again, that's an argument that only works in the English. The clear point we can see is, obviously Christ existed prior to His physical life. There is no way He could make these statements He did, if that were not the case. He couldn't possibly have known Abraham, He couldn't possibly have witnessed Satan falling from heaven, He can't claim that He came down from heaven, He can't be restored to glory that He had before the world was if He hadn't existed before the world was. Obviously, it doesn't make any sense that Christ came into existence at the point of His physical life.

That's the minority of the arguments in regards to the idea that Christ is a created being. The much more common argument is one you might say is a little easier to defend. I still don't think it's correct, but it's easier to defend. The reason I say that is because the argument doesn't debate the fact that Christ existed in the Old Testament. That He was around throughout all of the physical creation and He saw Satan fall and all of that—none of that is debated. The argument is that Christ is created because the first thing the Father created was Jesus Christ and then everything else came into existence after that. So, all these statements that Christ was around, interacting with everything else in creation is not a

problem because they don't debate that statement. What they are going to say is the very first thing that the Father created was Christ and then Christ was involved in creating everything else. You can see that's an easier argument to defend because all of the scriptures we just looked at are not in conflict. They are not even a subject of debate in that regard. However, this argument doesn't work either because there are several scriptures that make it very clear that Christ was not created; in fact, everything that was created, He was involved in the creation of. We can see this clearly in John 1:1.

John 1:1 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (NKJV)*

Notice, we're going to see in a minute we are conclusively talking about Jesus Christ. Notice it directly states the Word was God, in other words He is a God Being and He can be worshipped. I did a previous subject covering this subject. There are numerous examples prior to Him coming to earth and even while He was on earth as a physical human and even afterwards, of human beings bowing down and worshipping Him. Never once does He say "*Stand up, this is inappropriate, you should never do this.*" The Bible clearly has examples of the apostles doing that when people tried to bow down to them and of angels, when human beings are trying to bow down to them. They correct them and say "*No, don't do this, this is not appropriate, you can't worship me.*" Christ never did that. Even as a physical human being when He's walking the earth there are numerous examples of that being the case. The reason being is He is an eternal God Being and that's why that was okay. To continue in verse 2.

2) He was in the beginning with God.

3) All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. (NKJV)

If you look at some other Bible translations, I think the New Revised Standard is one of them, several of them word it likes this:

Nothing created that was created.

In other words, everything that can be said to be created, Christ was involved in its creation. Just to nail that down we know for sure we are talking about Christ here, just look at verse 14 and it totally conclusively nails this down.

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. (NKJV)

We know Who is the only begotten of the Father, we've already read that in John 3. We're referring to Christ. So the *Word* being referred to in John 1 is Christ. There is no ambiguity. We know that everything that was created, Christ was involved in its creation. This isn't the only scripture that addresses that. In Colossians 1 where we read verse 15 earlier but now we are going to read verse 16 and 17. Notice how specific this verse gets.

Colossians 1:16 *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.*

17) And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. (NKJV)

It's very clear, in heaven, on earth, visible and invisible, everything that can be said to be created, Christ was involved in creating it. It's impossible for Him to be created—because He's in heaven and invisible so He wouldn't fit into this—it's impossible to say that He was

created and yet He was involved in creating Himself? That doesn't make any sense. Obviously, He is an eternal God being.

Another issue that nails this subject down, is when we look at His role as Melchizedek. As we're going to see, we're going to cover a number of extra details as we go through this subject because oftentimes the identify of who Melchizedek gets debated. The common arguments are He is just a physical human being that existed in the Old Testament. The Jewish argument is that the individual referred to in Genesis as Melchizedek is Shem and there are other arguments of being a physical human being. There is also the argument that Melchizedek is a spirit being but somebody other than Christ. As we look at this, we are going to address both of those arguments. When we understand that Melchizedek and Christ are one and the same then it becomes very clear. The book of Hebrews directly tells us He is without father, without mother, without beginning of days or end of life—He is eternal. That's a very clear way of nailing down that He is eternal, that's the only way you can fulfill all those requirements.

Go to Genesis 14 and let's also take notice, as we look at this subject, that the majority of the times Melchizedek is mentioned are specifically in the book of Hebrews. There's only two times in the Old Testament that Melchizedek is even mentioned. In fact, there is only one time in the entire Bible that Melchizedek is mentioned that is not in the context of talking about the priesthood of Christ. That's important to notice because one of the arguments, as I mentioned, is the idea that Melchizedek is a spirit being but he's somebody other than Christ. That creates a problematic issue as well because if you look at all the references of where Melchizedek is mentioned, it's once in Genesis, once in Psalms and a handful of times in the book of Hebrews. The reference in Genesis is the only time He is mentioned that is not specifically in the context of referring to the priesthood of Jesus Christ. That's a big tip off as to His identity as well.

Genesis 14:18 *Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High.*

19) *And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth;*

20) *And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tithe of all. (NKJV)*

I want you to notice first of all, because one of the common arguments of the identity of Melchizedek is that he is a physical human being. The Jewish argument is that he is Shem, but there are others that argue that this is a physical human being. The reason I want to point this out is, that we know for a fact he is around in the book of Genesis interacting with Abraham. We're going to see later in the book of Hebrews it refers to him as still living. That's another huge tip off all by itself, as these two events are several thousand years apart. Yes, people before the flood had some long-life spans, but we don't have any record of anybody having any multiple thousand years life span and that's what would be required if this was a physical human being. He is also talked about in the book of Psalms and it's important we understand the reference in Psalms 110 because this reference gets quoted multiple times in the book of Hebrews when this subject gets talked about. We first need to fully understand what's being referred to here in Psalms, because this is the reference that Hebrews keeps repeatedly quoting. Psalms 110:1.

Psalms 110:1 *The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool." (NKJV)*

We know this is referring to Christ. The New Testament quotes this verse a number of times and tells us that this is absolutely referring to Christ. Go to verse 4.

4) *The LORD has sworn And will not relent, "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek."* (NKJV)

There is a lot of debate around this statement of *the order of Melchizedek*. Those who take the position that Melchizedek is a physical human being, interpret this statement, "the order of Melchizedek" is the idea that this is an order of a physical priesthood of men. Then they'll name certain other characters in the Old Testament and say this one is the first one that could be Melchizedek. He passed it down to this other one and they kept passing it down. That's the logic and their definition of the order of Melchizedek. The phrase we read right before *the order of Melchizedek*, explains to us what the order of Melchizedek is. It is, *you are priest forever*. When we get into the meaning of the words here, it is also as it's explained in Hebrews 7. The order of Melchizedek is referring to a spiritual priesthood. It's referring to being a Spirit Being and being a priest forever and that's what this is refers to.

To understand this, let's break apart the Hebrew words used in this phrase. When we read it in the English, we have *according to the order of*—we have a phrase in English. In Hebrew we have one word for that. That whole phrase has two words—one that refers to "according to the order of" and the other is the word for *Melchizedek*, so it's literally two words in Hebrew. The first word in Hebrew is transliterated as *dibrah* and it's Strong's #1700 and the definition I'm going to give is quoted from The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the Old Testament by Warren Baker and Eugene Carpenter and is defined as: A feminine singular noun meaning cause, in regard, manner. In the book of Job, used the word to describe how He was laying down His cause before God; Job 5:8. The word is also used in the Psalms when it describes the priest who would exercise his duties in the manner of Melchizedek, Psalms 110:4. In other words, another way to properly translate this is in the manner of Melchizedek.

Now let's understand what the word *Melchizedek* means because when we put it all together it adds some insight to all of this. Baker and Carpenter, they transliterate *Melchizedek* into English a little bit differently to what we are used to spelling it in most Bible translations but it's still kind of pronounced the same. They transliterate in their dictionary as *Malkiy sedeq*. It's Strong's #4442 and here is how they define it:

"A proper noun designating Malkiy sedeq the king and high priest of Salem, Jerusalem. The name means King of Righteousness or the King is righteous."

First of all, if you think about this in terms of the theory that this is referring to a carnal, physical human being, does it really make sense that God the Father is going to refer to a carnal, physical human being as the *King of Righteousness*? It doesn't add up in my mind that that would be the case. If you look at the phrase, *according to the order of Melchizedek*, another way to properly translate that into English is, *in the manner of the King of Righteousness*. What is *the manner of the King of Righteousness*? What you're going to see, as we put the puzzle together by going through Hebrews, the phrase right before in Psalm 110:4, gives us some really good insight. *"You are a priest forever, in the manner of the King of Righteousness."* The manner of the King of Righteousness is being a king forever and we'll see this as we go through Hebrews 7 because of this comparison and contrast going on between Melchizedek and the Levitical priesthood. The whole basis of the contrast is between mortal men who die and have an end to their time of being a priest, someone doing physical sacrifices that have symbolic meaning as contrasted with a spiritual priest who has no end to His services as priest. Who goes on forever, who does spiritual sacrifices that have greater meaning. That is this whole contrast taking place. We'll start at the end of chapter 6 to get the full context.

Hebrews 6:19 *This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil,*

20) *where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.* (NKJV)

In other words, *high priest forever in the manner of the King of Righteousness*. As we go through this next chapter, because we're going to read through this whole chapter, what you're going to see is this compare and contrast between Melchizedek as a spiritual priest and Levites as mortal humans or men as it's going to refer to them as. You're going to see the comparison based on the fact that they are both priests, they both receive tithes but the contrast is, the Levites are mortal men and they have an end to their priesthood because they die. They just offer physical sacrifices that have symbolic meaning and you have Melchizedek who is a priest forever, who is spiritual and has this much greater value in all He does. Keep noticing that contrast of being a priest forever versus being mortal men who have limited physical abilities and dies. Start in chapter 7:1.

Hebrews 7:1 *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, 2) to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated "king of righteousness," and then also king of Salem, meaning "king of peace,"* (NKJV)

We're going to look at this in more detail later in the sermon but those two titles are a major tip off as to the identity of Melchizedek. He's referred to as King of Righteousness and King of Peace. Does it make any sense that any physical, carnal human being would be referred to with those titles. That is pretty inconsistent with how the Bible treats the subject. Notice in particular, verse 3.

3) *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.* (NKJV)

Notice particularly that last statement, "remains a priest continually". In other words, He remains a priest, He is still a priest today when this is being written. This is a couple thousand years now after the events recorded in Genesis 14. That's one incredible lifespan if we're talking about a human being. The reason I point that out is, often people look at verse 3 and say:

"Really this is just trying to tell us that we just don't have the genealogy records for his life—that's the problem here—we just don't have the genealogy for Melchizedek."

It's the idea of saying,

"The problem here is that nobody has gone on ancestry.com and filled out his family tree. We don't have all the records to prove his lineage."

That's obviously not what this is getting at because we know He is around in Genesis 14 and it says He remains a priest continually. If he remains a priest at the time this is written, a couple thousand years later, it can't be a human being, that's just not going to make sense.

Let's continue in verse 4.

4) *Now consider how great this man was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils.*
5) *And indeed those who are of the sons of Levi, who receive the priesthood, have a commandment to receive tithes from the people according to the law, that is, from their brethren, though they have come from the loins of Abraham;*

- 6) *but he whose genealogy is not derived from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises.*
 7) *Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better.*
 8) *Here mortal men receive tithes, but there he receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives. (NKJV)*

It's comparing them based on the fact that they both received tithes—the Levitical priesthood received tithes and Melchizedek did too. It's equating them there, but it points out that the Levites are mortal men. This is for contrast. The only reason you would mention mortal men is because Melchizedek is not mortal; that's the point—He is not mortal; He is an eternal God Being. Verse 9.

- 9) *Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak,*
 10) *for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.*
 11) *Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek [or in the manner of the King of Righteousness], and not be called according to the order of Aaron? [Or in the manner of Aaron] (NKJV)*

People often think that Melchizedek was the first human being in the order of Melchizedek and the first Melchizedek passed it on to another human being and he was the second Melchizedek and so there is this line of physical priests who were prior to the Levitical priesthood. This doesn't match what is being talked about here. The manner of Aaron—these are mortal men versus an immortal priest.

- 13) *For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar.*
 14) *For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood.*
 15) *And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest*
 16) *who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life. (NKJV)*

Notice again that “endless life”.

- 17) *For He testifies: “You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.” (NKJV)*

Or in the *manner of the King of Righteousness*.

- 18) *For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness,*
 19) *for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, there is the bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.*
 20) *And inasmuch as He was not made priest without an oath*
 21) *(for they have become priests without an oath, but He with an oath by Him who said to Him: “The LORD has sworn And will not relent, ‘You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek’”...(NKJV)*

Or in the *manner of the King of Righteousness* and what is the *manner of the King of Righteousness*? Being a king forever—being a Spirit Being.

- 22) *by so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant.*

23) *Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing.* (NKJV)

Notice the whole contrast is, mortal men who die versus an eternal priest who doesn't.

24) *But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood.*

25) *Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.*

26) *For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens;*

27) *who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.*

28) *For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son who has been perfected forever.* (NKJV)

When we understand that Christ is Melchizedek—that's Who is being referred to—it's very clear that He has no beginning; He is without genealogy, without father or mother, without beginning of days or end of life. We will get to the issue of why He is the *Son* of the Father, which refers to His life as a physical human being and how that came about. Prior to that, if we are referring to His existence, like what happened in Genesis 14, there was no father/son relationship there. There was a God/Servant relationship there, there wasn't a Father/Son relationship because there was no beginning of Christ to begin with.

If we look at these titles of King of Righteousness and King of Peace, that is going to tip us off as to the identity of Melchizedek. As I mentioned, there are two common theories. One that Melchizedek is a physical human being, the other that He is a Spirit Being but somebody other than Christ. Let's look at these titles and the roles to see how this directly connects everything to Jesus Christ and His identity. Even when we read in Genesis 14, it referred to Melchizedek as both a king and a priest. Of course, Genesis 14 is prior to the nation of Israel but if you're familiar with how things functioned in Ancient Israel, there were kings and there were priests. But priests weren't kings and kings weren't priests. These were two totally separate concepts and not one individual held both roles. They were both uniquely separate and different roles. The Bible clearly tells us that Christ was both a king and a priest. Zechariah 6:12.

Zechariah 6:12 *Then speak to him, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, saying: "Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH!"* (NKJV)

The Branch is a common term that's applied to Jesus Christ.

12 continued) *... From His place He shall branch out, And He shall build the temple of the LORD;*

13) *Yes, He shall build the temple of the LORD. He shall bear the glory, And shall sit and rule on His throne; So He shall be a priest on His throne, And the counsel of peace shall be between them both.'* (NKJV)

He talks about sitting on a throne—that is something a king does—but he is also a priest. This is an individual Who is a king and a priest simultaneously. This fits with the description of Melchizedek because Christ held both of these roles. Now let's look at the titles. As we saw, the very name *Melchizedek* means "King of Righteousness" and He's referred to as "*King of Righteousness*" and "*King of Peace*". These titles are directly connected with Christ. We can see very similar statements made numerous times directly referring to Christ.

Malachi 4:2 *But to you who fear My name The Sun of Righteousness shall arise With healing in His wings; And you shall go out And grow fat like stall-fed calves.* (NKJV)

It's referring to Christ with the title of "*Sun of righteousness*. If you think about this, with basic common sense in the context of the Bible, referring to a physical human being as the King of Righteousness, it doesn't add up; that God would refer to a carnal, physical human being having that title. It totally fits with Jesus Christ though. Let's go to Hebrews 1 and look at several statements in the Bible that give very similar statements and titles to Christ that match with *King of righteousness*.

Hebrews 1:8 *But to the Son He says: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever [this is the Father speaking to the Son]; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom.* (NKJV)

The Son has a kingdom so obviously He's the king but the scepter of that kingdom is a scepter of Righteousness—the King of Righteousness.

9) *You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions.*" (NKJV)

When we go to Jeremiah 23, we see another statement made about Christ, right along the same lines.

Jeremiah 23:5 *Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness [Christ is often referred to as the Branch or the Branch of David. He's also referred to in the next statement:]; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.* (NKJV)

He's a King who executes righteousness and judgement. You can see the obvious connection.

6) *In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely; Now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.* (NKJV)

Let me briefly address that statement. Often people will take this statement and say that this is obviously talking about Christ as it calls Him, *Yehovah our Righteousness*—so Christ is Yehovah, so you can put Christ's name wherever you want to, whenever you see the tetragrammaton in the Old Testament. Well, if you think that one through, just take Christ's name in the New Testament—we often refer to Him in English as Jesus. If you look at this in Hebrew as it would have been originally, it's actually *Jeshua* and that is a shortened version of *Jehoshua* which was His real name in Hebrew. Its meaning is "Yehovah saves". If you directly translate that into English, His name would be *Yehovah saves*. That doesn't mean you can slot Christ in every time you see Yehovah in the Old Testament. It's a name that refers back to the Father and also tells us His role that He was the sacrifice the Father gave that enabled all of us to be saved. His very name refers to that and it's *Yehovah saves*. Just because He's also referred to as Yehovah our Righteousness doesn't prove He is the God of the Old Testament, it's a biblical trend you will see a lot, where names point back to the Father as the ultimate source. So that's more about how that should be understood.

The other issue we need to look at also is the title King of Peace. We see a similar statement made of Christ in Isaiah 9:6.

Isaiah 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, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.* (NKJV)

I just read this to you out of the New King James translation of the Bible. Unfortunately, you'll find a lot of English translations of the Bible word this verse very similarly. However, according to Hebrew scholar Nehemia Gordon, it's not exactly in line with what the Hebrew says. If you are familiar at all with who Nehemia Gordon is, he is actually a Karaite Jew. He is not church of God related at all but is a well-known scholar of Hebrew and ancient languages and manuscripts. Being a Karaite Jew means he rejects all the rabbinical traditions and believes in the Old Testament but is not a believer in the New Testament. He is, however, an expert in Hebrew and he states this verse is translated a little differently to how we see it in the New King James and is more consistent with the Bible as a whole. Let me just read to you how he would translate this last phrase. Nehemia would translate it as:

And the wonderful counselor, mighty God, eternal Father, called His name Prince of Peace.

What He is saying is, the first several statements are referring to the Father and the Father calls Christ the Prince of Peace. The reason I say this is consistent with the Bible in general is, there are not any other scriptures in the entire Bible where you can see Christ being referred to as Father. He is referred to as the Son of God, as God's Servant, as our older Brother, our Savior, High Priest, but never as our Father because He's not—God the Father is our Father. This is consistent with every other verse because it's the only verse in the Bible where you can even try to make the argument that Christ is referred to as Father.

To me, that Hebrews makes a lot more sense because it's consistent with the rest of the Bible. That is just a basic principle of biblical interpretation. We can't just make a doctrine off of one single scripture, we also have to consider how does this fit in with the overall picture of the Bible. Overtime, what we have passed down of the Bible are copies of copies of copies of an original language and then translated from language into another and nuances can get messed up along that path. One of the ways you sort that out is by not only looking at different language experts, but asking how does this match with everything else the Bible says. It would be literally the only scripture in the Bible that would refer to Christ as a father, if it were correctly translated here. To me it makes more sense what Nehemia says, because that matches everything else the Bible has to say on the subject.

If we look at the titles, *King of Righteousness* and *King of Peace*, it clearly points to the identity of Melchizedek as being one and the same with Jesus Christ. Also consider the fact that you have a handful of references in the Bible of Melchizedek and every single one of them with the exception of Genesis 14 only mentions of Melchizedek in the context of explaining the priesthood of Jesus Christ. He is not mentioned in any other way. In everything we have covered, there is no way a physical human being was alive in Genesis 14 to interact with Abraham and He was also still around a couple thousand years later when the book of Hebrews is written—no human being could pull that off. The only way that would make sense is if Melchizedek is immortal and He's not a mortal human. The other common argument is, he's not a human, he's a spirit being but somebody other than Christ. That begs some other questions as well. That means he is an eternal God being as well and why does he play no other role in the Bible? Why is it that every time when the apostles, particularly Paul, begin all of their epistles by saying "*I send you greetings from God the Father and Jesus Christ*" and never brings out this third person Melchizedek? We need to mention that that doesn't happen. All of this indicates that Christ and Melchizedek are one the same and then once you put that together, it's very, very clear, Christ is an eternal God being, He has always existed, He is worthy of our worship and had no starting point.

These several scriptures, if you interpret them in a particular way, would certainly suggest that Christ has a starting point—that He's the first thing that God the Father created. How are we to understand those particular scriptures? Let's conclude by covering that question, beginning in Revelation 3:14 where we began this sermon.

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: (NKJV)*

if this verse was the only thing we had to go on and you read this in English, it would certainly sound like the very first thing that God the Father created was Jesus Christ. That would certainly make sense if you looked at it in English. But we have to understand, that's not the original intended meaning. It doesn't match all the other scriptures that we have looked at. Even if we look into the Greek from which our English Bibles were translated, we get a much clearer picture. The Greek word that is translated into the English word *beginning* is transliterated into English as *arche* and is Strong's #746. I'm quoting from The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament by Spiros Zodhiates and here's how he defines the word:

Beginning—arche denotes an active cause as in Colossians 1:18 and Revelation 3:14. Christ is called the Beginning because He is the efficient cause of the creation, the Head, because He is before all things and all things were created by Him and for Him.

It's saying He is the original cause, He is the Head of creation, that's why it's referred to as the beginning. It's not that He was the first thing God the Father created and therefore He was the first in succession of all the creations—no, He is the Head of it, He is the Source through which it came through and that's why He is referred to with that term. Let's also understand what we mean by *firstborn* in Colossians 1. Turn to Colossians 1:15.

Colossians 1:15 *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. (NKJV)*

As I mentioned, if you think of this in terms of a physical family, your firstborn is the first child of your family to be born. If Jesus was the firstborn of all creation, He would be the first thing created. If we just keep reading, we immediately see a problem with that.

16) 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.

17) And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist ... (NKJV)

Obviously, He can't have created everything visible and invisible in heaven and earth and also created Himself—that's not going to work. Notice in verse 18.

18) And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. (NKJV)

Notice that word *preeminence* in verse 18. Notice also how verse 15 is worded. He is the *firstborn over all creation*. It doesn't say firstborn of all creation, it says firstborn *over* all creation. If we understand what the Greek word means, we see exactly how to understand this and why I pointed out the words *over* and *preeminence*. The Greek word that is translated as *firstborn* in verse 15 is transliterated into English as *prototokos*, Strong's #4416 and is defined by Zodhiates as *firstborn, preeminent*. In other words, it can have two different meanings. It can mean *firstborn*, like the first child born in a family, it can also mean *the*

preeminent one. We can go both routes with this. Let's notice what he also has to say about this.

"The word *prototokos* is also used in relation to God's creation, referring to Christ's supremacy over it. Jesus Christ cannot be both Creator and creature. In Colossians 1:15, He is placed above His creation when He is called "*prototokos*" *pases #3596 "of all", ktiseos #2937 the firstborn*, of every creature or better still the one preeminent over all creation. The next verse makes it adequately clear, for by Him were all things created. Meaning that He Himself is not part of creation. The meaning approximates that of the noun *arche*, beginning, which means objectively the first effect, the first created thing or subjectively the first cause, the source of creation. In Revelation 3:14, the noun *arche* in the phrase, the *arche toskisos* is intended to identify Jesus as the first *cause* or *source* of creation and not the first object of creation. Jesus Christ is consequently the *arche*, *the ruler over all*."

This is why He is the firstborn over all creation and has the preeminence. It's not trying to say that he is the first one created, it's trying to say He is the source of it, He is the ruler over all of it, that's the meaning that is intended. It's not at all trying to state that Christ had a beginning point and is therefore not eternal.

As I mentioned in the beginning of this sermon, one of the common arguments that Christ is a created being is also based around the fact that He is repeatedly referred to as the *Son of God* in the Bible and also as the *begotten Son of God*. Both of those terminologies of *son* and *begotten*, as we understand are typical concepts in English particularly. All indicate the creation or birth of someone. In other words, someone having a beginning point. Let's go back over to John 3, where we started off looking at this particular verse but let's read this again. It's a very common scripture.

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*
17) *For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.*
18) *He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (NKJV)*

People look at this and say, that means He came into existence when He was born as a human being because He's the Son of God and He's begotten. Yes, these terms do refer to the fact he was born as a physical human being and that's how these terms should be understood. They are not in terms of *His original starting point*; He wasn't created at any particular point but this was just human reproduction. If you understand this, it's easy to see why Christ is referred to as the *only begotten* Son of the Father. We know the Father was directly involved in creating Adam, created him by fiat, brought him into existence and then all the other human beings have come from Adam and Eve. In Adam's case he's not begotten, there was no egg and sperm that had to come together and then create a pregnancy—Adam was created as an adult, basically by fiat created into existence and so is Eve, she was taken from Adam's rib and made as an adult. They, through human reproduction bring about the rest of mankind all throughout creation. The only individual that can ever be said that the Father begot—in that human birth, physical sense—is Jesus Christ. How Christ came into existence is from an egg that Mary had and the Father through the Holy Spirit impregnates that, along the human sperm end of how that would normally be done through physical conception and this brings about Christ's life. He is the only begotten Son of the Father. We often speak of being begotten with the Holy Spirit which is another analogy, another concept, but obviously there were human beings who had the Holy Spirit before Christ came to earth and lived His physical life. He wouldn't be the first human being on the earth who had the Holy Spirit. We know John the Baptist did, we know lots of other

individuals born before Christ had that but there was only one individual who was begotten in terms of coming about as a human being in that sense by the Holy Spirit of the Father. This account can be found in Luke 1:26.

Luke 1:26 *Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth,*
27) *to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.*
28) *And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!"*
29) *But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was.*
30) *Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.*
31) *And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS.*
32) *He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David.*
33) *And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."*
34) *Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?"*
35) *And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.*
36) *Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren.*
37) *For with God nothing will be impossible."*
38) *Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her. (NKJV)*

We can see the statements about Christ being the Son of God and in particular, the begotten Son of God are directly referring to His life as a physical human being and how He came into existence in physical form. It's not at all implying His ultimate source was being created by the Father and He is not an eternal God being—He clearly is an eternal God Being. He's not just a super archangel, as the theory goes, when people say He is created. As I mentioned at the beginning of the sermon, one of the things you will see, in the church of God affiliated groups—the whole hierarchy of organizations that would trace their organizational roots back to a similar point—you'll find those who identify the Father as the God of the Old Testament, as the tetragrammaton as His name, they often teach that Christ is a created being. That is why we often get accused that we are teaching that or we're going to teach that, which we never have at any point nor even flirted with the idea. What also comes with that is the downgrading the role of Jesus Christ, claiming He's not a God Being, He's not eternal or worthy of our worship and it takes Him down to the level of a super archangel.

I wanted to cover this for several reasons. To put fully on the record that we don't teach Christ is a created being—we never have. We have addressed this thoroughly so these allegations can go away. I think it's also important for us to fully appreciate, as we go into Passover, to focus on the role of Christ and all He did for us. The meaning of His sacrifice and the fact that this is an eternal God Being Who voluntarily gave up that status to become a physical human being, to suffer, to take on all of our sins and to pay the penalty for us due to nothing He deserved in any way, shape or form. He took it all on for us so He could pay that penalty so that we could have an opportunity to have a relationship with His Father and an opportunity to receive salvation and be born into the Kingdom of God. As we go into the Passover season in the next few weeks, let's realize the magnitude of Who Jesus Christ is and therefore the magnitude of the incredible sacrifice He made for all of us.