

WHAT DOES PRE-HUMAN EXISTENCE REALLY MEAN?

In philosophical ideas the concept of the pre-human existence of a spirit person in heaven with an intangible body who later became the human embryo that was Jesus in Mary's womb has been proposed to mean either that:

1. The **whole spirit person** was transferred completely and directly into the womb of Mary. Or
2. The **whole spirit person** was changed directly into a human embryo in Mary's womb. Or
3. The **personality** of the spirit person was transferred directly into the human embryo. Or
4. The **life** or **intangible life-force** of the spirit person was transferred directly into the human embryo.

ANALYSING JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES' TEACHING OF A PRE-HUMAN JESUS

Jehovah's Witnesses and the various Bible Student groups teach that Jesus, on earth, was **fully human** and was the equal of the pristine Adam. This teaching means that he was not a hybrid - part human/part spirit creature. Yet these denominations also teach that Jesus had a pre-human existence, having been created as a spirit before the Genesis creation. Then at the time of Jesus' conception the spirit creature's **life** was transferred to Mary's womb. The Bible Student groups generally do not accept the Jehovah's Witnesses teaching that Jesus was previously the archangel Michael; but nevertheless they believe that he previously was a spirit person existing in heaven. However, the same reasoning applies in both camps and in support of such teaching appeal is made to Philippians 2 and the concept of kenosis whereby a spirit person completely emptied himself of himself and entered Mary's womb. (This teaching is a form of Arianism).

NOTE: The concept of Kenosis is also appealed to by many Trinitarians. Please see STUDY 15 which shows that Philippians 2 does not teach any ontological emptying by Jesus of his essence.

In analysing the four proposals stated at the beginning it is evident that:

#1 If the **whole spirit person** had been transferred completely and directly into the womb of Mary it would create a physical hybrid i.e. part spirit person/part human and is the very Gnostic teaching which early Christianity slaved to keep out of the congregation; yet it reappeared in the form of the later speculations in Trinitarianism whereby a proposed 'God the Son' entered Mary's womb and was born as Jesus - a being who was a God/man. If this concept were applied to Michael the archangel it would result in an angel/man.

#2 If the **whole spirit person** had been changed completely into a human embryo in Mary's womb then a fully human Jesus would be the result. However, such a change would:

- Be a Greek philosophical speculation which has also been used by science fiction writers.
- Break God's law for there being no crossing of the barriers of the species i.e. everything as being kept "according to its kind" (Gen. 1:21, 24).
- Preclude any past connection with the previous life regarding character, accumulated knowledge, wisdom, and powers because Jesus would go through the stages from embryo

to child etc. So we must ask: At what point in his life would Jesus have acquired such abilities? However, the Bible provides no hint of any time when he gained these, only that God did miraculous works *through* him (Acts 2:22, 23; 10:38; John 5:19, 14:10b). In other words Jesus never, at any time, intrinsically had any super powers or abilities. So this proposal would be a pointless exercise and Jehovah may just as well have directly made another Adam from the dust of the ground.

#3 If the **life as the personality** of the spirit person had been transferred directly into the human embryo, then a hybrid human Jesus would still be the result, because of his having the character, accumulated knowledge, wisdom, and abilities of the super-powerful spirit person. But this concept would mean that:

- Personality is something separate from body? But is one's body only the external and the personality only the internal part of a person? Such an idea smacks of the pagan Greek concept of the inner person as being a separate soul.
- Such a person would, in some sense, be superhuman and therefore not really a human.

#4 If the **life as the intangible life-force** of the spirit person had been transferred directly into the human embryo, then, in biblical terms, an impossible scenario arises because life or life-force is **impersonal** and pervades all of living creation. So there could be no transferral of the **intangible life-force** of any specific spirit person, which leaves the creation of a Jesus who is fully and purely human with no connection to any past life.

FOLLOWING THE LOGIC OF WBTS TEACHING

The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society appears to have presented very little reasoning on what the concept of a pre-human Jesus must mean or how such a concept really works. Their Bible encyclopaedia *Insight on the Scriptures* Vol. 2, p. 56 speaks of: “the transferral of **the life** of his first-born son from the spirit realm to earth.” Additionally they teach that:

1. Spirit persons have bodies:
“the **bodies** of spirit persons (*God, Christ, the angels*) are glorious”
Insight on the Scriptures Vol. 1 p.348.
2. The soul (*the whole person*) = body + spirit.
3. Spirit = **life, life force** or life principle all of which are **impersonal**. See *Insight on the Scriptures* Vol. 2, p. 246, sub-heading ‘Organism.’

Yet the WBTS also teaches that only the archangel Michael's **life** was transferred to Mary's womb. So because they teach that creatures in heaven have spiritual bodies [albeit intangible] we must ask what does such transferral of **life** mean? Was the spirit person's body also transferred or was it left lifeless in heaven?

MICHAEL REALLY GOES OUT OF EXISTENCE.

If only the archangel Michael's or other spirit person's **life** was transferred to Mary's womb by being separated from his body, then his **lifeless spirit body** would be left in heaven. He would no longer be a soul (*whole person*). His person would have **ceased existence** when his **body** and **life** were separated.

NO PERSONALITY IS TRANSFERRED TO MARY

If only the archangel Michael's or other spirit person's **life** was transferred to Mary's womb, it would mean that **an impersonal force** would have come from heaven and into Mary so that *no personality* from Michael could be present in Mary's womb because **life**

(spirit) is **impersonal**. Yet the WBTS maintains the contradictory position 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.

This proposition, that clearly contradicts the above WBTS teachings, creates for them the impossible situation that Jesus would have been genetically **entirely from Mary** and nothing to do with the characteristics/personality of the archangel Michael. It would also mean that Michael's **impersonal life force** simply and impossibly used Jesus' body as a carrier for 33 years until Jesus was killed.

THE PRE-HUMAN EXISTENCE OF A PERSON IS ILLOGICAL

Because no one can exist before they exist it is posited that Michael gave up who he was to become a human. However, no one can give up who they are and continue to be the same person. So the connection with Michael is completely lost. Again, such ideas only originate in Greek mythology.

JESUS WOULD HAVE BEEN EITHER A HYBRID OR A SPIRIT IN HUMAN FORM

For Jesus to have been 100% human neither the 'life' nor the personality nor the complete spirit creature could be part of his constitution and so no spirit creature or his 'life' or personality could have been transferred to Mary's womb; otherwise, he would indeed have been either a hybrid or entirely a spirit having taken on human form. These factors make the whole concept taught by these denominations impossible. In fact, although denied by the WBTS and the Bible Students organizations, the concept of a pre-human existence or what is commonly called pre-existence really would require the creation of a single person having two natures—human and spirit and therefore being a hybrid.

THE PROBLEM OF TWO NATURES

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. Although denied, a similar problem logically arises for** those with the Arian teaching (substitute *God the Son* for *Archangel/Spirit*). To deal with this problem appeal is made to the Doctrine of Kenosis concerning the supposed emptying out of the essence and nature of a spirit creature. This doctrine is unsupportable for a number of reasons explained in STUDY 15. **Technically: A spirit creature genetically combined with Mary's egg = a hybrid.** This is similar to a Nephilim which is the product of angelic/human sexual union (Gen. 6:1-4) and therefore not a genuine human. He would be neither human nor spirit and **could not be the equal of the pristine Adam.** Furthermore, if the impossibility of the life i.e. the personality could have been transferred to the embryo in Mary's womb then again Jesus would have been a hybrid. If Jesus had really been a previously existing spirit person it would seem utterly pointless for him to have divested himself of all the wisdom and knowledge inherently associated with his ability as agent of the Genesis creation and then have to acquire some of it again. The Scriptures clearly show Jesus as having to acquire wisdom:

- “Jesus went on **growing in wisdom** and physical growth and **in favor with God and men**” (**Luke 2:52**).

A being that looks like a man, but has a pre-existent pre-human mind with pre-human memories and character attributes, is fundamentally different to all other men. Of course, no

embryo or baby could cope with such a full knowledge and wisdom that any spirit being has. So it seems pointless to transfer an angel's life into a human womb. In such an imagined *transfer* Michael evidently would have brought nothing of himself into Mary's womb, so **there was no retaining of Michael's** (or other spirit person's) **personal identity**. In reality Jesus built his **entire character** as the man Jesus so as to establish himself in God's favour! Such character development could not in any way connect to that of an angel/spirit being because Jesus was developing within the human framework.

Furthermore, there is no Scripture which states that Jehovah revealed to Jesus that he had previously existed before becoming human.

NOTE: In reality the phrase *pre-human existence of Jesus* makes no sense because one is either human or not. This false concept is better expressed as: *the non-human origin of Jesus*.

ANALOGY

As an analogy consider that if someone removes a car engine from say a Nissan Micra and has it fitted into a Rolls Royce does one still have a genuine Rolls Royce? Absolutely not!! It is a very substandard hybrid Rolls Royce/Micra. So if a powerful spirit creature existed in heaven and then was transferred to the womb of a human woman, he still carries with him the spirit equivalent of DNA which is then hybridized with human genetics and so is sub-standard in all respects rather than his being the perfect human that is detailed in the Scriptures. It is no good for Jehovah's Witnesses to claim that they view Jesus as 100% human because that does not fit with their presentation of a scenario in which a pre-existent spirit is reformed in the womb of a human. Again please note the impossibility of transferring a personality without its body.

SMACKS OF PAGANISM

However, the Scriptures show that Jesus did not have two natures, therefore making it impossible for him to have had a pre-human existence unless we say that an entire spirit person **was transferred directly** into Mary's womb with no connection being made with any of her genetic material. If so, then Mary would simply have been a surrogate rather than Jesus' real mother and Jesus would have been fully spirit but changed into human form and so have been an incarnation. Such a concept, found within the rejected Greek Gnostic teaching of the second century, smacks of paganism inasmuch as it is associated with the idea of pre-existing souls commonly found also in Buddhism and Hinduism.

JESUS WAS NOT TRANSFERRED - HE WAS BEGOTTEN

In the case of a so-called pre-human Jesus the human nature must have come from the **human** Davidic line through Mary's chromosomes, and the second nature must have come supposedly by *the transfer of* something of an existing **spirit** creature implanted in Mary by God. So clearly the teaching that Jesus was 100% human and yet had a pre-human existence is contradictory; and more importantly, such a supposed transferring of an already existing person goes beyond the description of the origin of Jesus in Luke and Matthew or, in fact, any Scripture. Nowhere do the Scriptures speak of any **transfer of** a life form into Mary's womb. Rather Matthew 1:20 speaks of "*that which was begotten (generated) in her.*" To generate something means to bring it into existence.

THE GENUINE 100% HUMANITY OF JESUS

The teaching that a pre-existing person called the Word or Michael was implanted in Mary's womb, rather than human male genetics created miraculously by God, would mean that Jesus could not be fully human. The Scriptures make it clear that holy spirit

“overshadowed” Mary to produce this second human “Son of God”:

- “But Mary said to the angel: “How is this to be, since I am having no intercourse with a man?” In answer the angel said to her: “Holy spirit will come upon you, and power of the Most High will **overshadow you. For that reason** also what is born will be called holy, **God’s Son**” (Luke 1:34, 35).
- “...since the ‘young children’ are sharers of **blood and flesh** (*mortal human nature*) he [*Jesus*] also similarly partook of the same things ... he was obliged to become *like* his brothers **in all respects**” (Heb. 2:14, 17).

Catholic writer Thomas Hart states:

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?

Professor of theology John Knox comments:

the assertion of Christ’s pre-existence, placed **a strain**, so to speak, **upon the humanity of Jesus** which it was **unable to bear**...it is simply incredible that a divine person should have become a fully and normal human person—that is, if he was also to continue to be, in his essential identity, the same person.

The Humanity and Divinity of Christ

NO PART OF JESUS WAS A SPIRIT BEING

- “...persons not confessing Jesus Christ as coming **in the flesh** (*Gk en sarki*). This is the deceiver and the antichrist” (2 John 7).

In promoting the humanity of Jesus, John’s statement was to counter the false teaching of Gnostic docetism which taught that Jesus only seemed to be human and that as a spirit he came into a human body rather than coming as a human.

THE DESCENDANT FROM DAVID OR THE PERSON FROM HEAVEN — BUT NOT BOTH

The two natures teaching and the incarnation teaching are totally at odds with the Scriptures because Jesus is shown to be **a lineal descendant of Abraham and David** (Matt.1:1) and so having genetics transmitted from them to Mary; otherwise Jesus would not have been a descendant of David because of being not from the human gene pool. Furthermore, the scriptural fact remains that Jesus has a single nature—human, partly from the female genetics of Mary and partly from male genetics provided by the “*power of the Most High.*” **Only a combination of female and male human genetics can produce a human.**

Although we do not have detailed information to explain how the begetting of Jesus took place we do know that “*power of the Most High will overshadow you [Mary]*” (Luke 1:35). In this statement there is no mention of the transfer of another entity into Mary’s womb. However, if we imagine that it had been actually possible for the real **disembodied personality** or life-force of Michael to be transferred to Mary’s womb and to have been combined with the Davidic genetics in one of Mary’s eggs, then Jesus would have been a hybrid who was *half human and half archangel*. Such a concept does not fit with the biblical data.

ADAM AS A TYPE OF JESUS

Jesus was the equivalent “of Adam, who is **a type of him that was to come**” (Rom. 5:14 note KIT). As a mortal it is impossible that Jesus had previously existed as an immortal i.e. as an angel or other spirit creature (Luke 20:36).

THE TEMPTATIONS

The Scriptures show that, when being tested, Jesus had no supernatural advantage over any other human; yet this is exactly what he would have had if he had previously been a spirit person. However, Jesus was:

➤ “...one who has been *tested in all respects* like ourselves, **but without sin**” (Heb. 4:15).

If Jesus had any recollection of a previous life as the agent of the Genesis creation it would have rendered his temptation virtually futile. To put Jesus in such a position would dramatically detract from his superb achievement in having been tested and yet **not sinned**.

THE DISCIPLES POSE NO EXCITED QUESTIONS ABOUT PRIOR LIFE IN HEAVEN

If, in fact, Jesus was telling his disciples that **his previous residence was heaven** with God and all the angels why do the Scriptures not record a vast array of questions from the disciples as to what it was like in heaven and what angels are really like and indeed what God is really like. Instead, the writers made much of the fact that, after resurrection, Jesus went to heaven to sit at God’s right hand.

JESUS WAS 100% HUMAN AFTER HIS RESURRECTION

- “...he [God] has set a day...to judge the inhabited earth by a **man** whom he has appointed” (Acts 17:31).
- “...Jesus...a **man** having been attested to you” (Acts 2:22 UBS).
- “There is one mediator...**a man** Christ Jesus” (1Tim. 2:5).
- “...resurrection is also through a **man**” (1 Cor. 15:21).
- “The first man Adam” (1 Cor. 15: 45).

*The term Adam is with reference to mankind and implies that “the last Adam” is also fully human, albeit **glorified and immortal**.*

THE NATURAL BODY EXISTED BEFORE THE SPIRITUAL BODY

- “The first man Adam became a living soul. **The last Adam** became a life-giving spirit. Nevertheless the *first* is not that which is spiritual but *that which is natural* (soulical KIT)” (1 Cor. 15:45, 46).

Indeed, Adam (“*the first...that which is natural*”) came into existence before Jesus (“*the spiritual*”). So Adam existed prior to Jesus in any literal form. For Jesus to be the last Adam he clearly must have his entire origin in the human gene pool, being no hybrid and so making him as entirely human as Adam was.

THERE WAS NEVER ANY ISSUE OVER A PRE-HUMAN JESUS IN THE FIRST CENTURY

Whenever there is a change of highly significant beliefs or procedures controversy is inevitable. This was true in the 1st century during the transition period from Judaism to

Christianity when there were indeed a number of major teachings and practices that changed. Some of these issues caused controversies among Christians themselves and some of these issues led to persecution of Christians by the Jewish leaders. So did the issue of a pre-existent Jesus fall into either of these categories?

- Was there, in the biblical record any issue among Christians over whether or not Jesus had been the archangel Michael who then was transferred into Mary's womb?
- Was this, according to the biblical record, a teaching that was preached so that there would be discontent and even persecution of Christians by the Jewish leadership who were expecting a Messiah entirely from the human gene pool i.e. one descended from Abraham through David?
- Was this a teaching that was preached only to the Gentiles who would be more receptive to the Platonic concept of pre-existence

THE MAIN FIRST CENTURY CONTROVERSIES AMONG CHRISTIANS

1. The accepting of Gentile Christians as now being the people of God along with Jewish Christians (Gal. 2:11-14).
2. Gentile believers not being required to keep the Mosaic Law (Acts 15:23-29).
3. Jewish Christians not being required to keep the Mosaic Law (Col. 2:16, 17; Heb 10:10).
4. Correct usage of the Gifts of the spirit (1 Cor. 12-14).
5. Orderliness at meetings (1 Cor.14:34-40; 1Tim. 2:8-15).
6. The respectful celebrating of the Lord's Evening Meal (1 Cor. 11).

However, it is evident that the controversies of the 1st century Christian Congregation never involved whether or not Jesus had previously been Michael the archangel or any other spirit person. Was this because the Jewish Christians expected a Messiah who had pre-existed and therefore it was not an issue for any of them? No. The Jews of the 1st century did not believe in a coming Messiah who pre-existed himself i.e. one who had previously been a different creature in heaven, but rather one who was fully part of humanity. They expected a Messiah entirely from the human gene pool i.e. one descended from Abraham through David? (Please see STUDIES 13 and 14). Furthermore, almost all leading scholars agree that the concept of pre-existence was entirely of pagan Greek origin and not taught in the Hebrew Scriptures.

ISSUES BRINGING PERSECUTION FROM THE JEWISH LEADERSHIP

1. The resurrection of Jesus as proclaimed by Peter and John (Acts 4:2; 5:28).
2. That Jesus would destroy the temple and "alter the customs which Moses handed down to us" as supposedly proclaimed by Stephen (Acts 6:14; 7:54-58).
3. That Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God as proclaimed by Paul (Acts 9:20-22). (Acts 9:23-25).
4. For Paul's bringing a Gentile [*Trophimus from Ephesus*] into the inner courts of the Temple in Jerusalem (Acts 21:28-29).
5. For Paul's preaching that Jesus had died and was now alive" (Acts 25:18-19).

As can be seen from this list the Christian teaching issues concerning Jesus which brought down the wrath of the Jewish religious leaders concerned the **claim that he is the Messiah and that he was resurrected**. If the earliest Christians had preached about a pre-existent Messiah they would have been severely persecuted by the Jewish leadership for preaching a significantly distorted version of the coming Messiah. However, the record shows that the earliest Christians were never persecuted over this subject and so showing how very unlikely it was that they ever believed in a pre-existent Jesus.

ISSUES BRINGING PERSECUTION BY GENTILES

1. The advocating of “customs that are not lawful for us [*in Philippi*] as Romans to accept or practice” (Acts 16:21) by Paul and Silas.
2. The proclaiming that Jesus, as the Messiah, had to die and rise from the dead (Acts 17:3) [*Paul and Silas in Thessalonica*].
3. An accusation that Christians [*in Thessalonica*] were “acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus” (Acts 17:7).
4. For Paul’s teaching that idols were not really gods (Acts 19:26) and so causing the crowds to chant for many hours: “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians.”

Not once were the earliest Christians accused by Gentiles of teaching that Jesus was actually God’s agent for the creation of the universe. (Please see STUDIES 10 and 11). In fact, there is nothing in the biblical record, particularly in Acts, of the preaching by 1st century Christians that the archangel Michael had descended into Mary’s womb. (Please see STUDIES 15 and 16).

THERE NEVER WAS AN ISSUE OVER A PRE-EXISTENT MESSIAH IN THE 1ST CENTURY

All of this is evidence that the earliest Christians never changed their view away from the biblical and Jewish statements concerning the coming human Messiah as one who would be descended from Abraham and in the line of David i.e. entirely within the human gene pool. Indeed it would be strange if Christians had engaged in the above controversies and put up with persecution over the above listed issues and yet never engaged in a controversy or suffered any persecution because of Christian acceptance of a teaching that Messiah had now been revealed as being the archangel Michael descended from heaven through Mary’s womb. Such a major issue would surely have brought controversy if it really had been taught.

A MID-2ND CENTURY ISSUE

The first century Middle Platonic philosopher NUMENIUS introduced the idea of a **2nd transcendental entity** between the Supreme Being and the universe. The Christian philosopher Justin Martyr first used the word *pre-existence* with reference to Jesus in about 150 C.E. However, Justin had been thoroughly schooled in the Greek philosophical thinking of his day, including the thoughts of Numenius whose ideas he found attractive. So JUSTIN applied Numenius’ ideas to Jesus, speaking of him as an “arithmetically second God” saying:

There is and there is said to be *another God* and Lord subject to the Maker of all things; who is also called **an Angel**, because he announces to all men whatsoever the Maker of all things.

Justin also stated that:

...though I should *not be able to prove his pre-existence*...For some of our race, who admit that he is the Christ, while holding him to be **man of men**; with whom I do not agree.

This shows that even by 150 C.E. the majority Christian view was that Jesus was not pre-existent but a **“man of men.”**

Catholic theologian Karl-Josef Kuschel shows this to be the first major step away from biblical Christianity when he makes the comment that:

The Christology of **Jewish Christianity** which had been dominant for decades and **knew of no pre-existence** Christology was increasingly swept aside and was finally branded heretical.

Earlier the Apostle Paul had foretold that: “They will ... wander off into myths.” (**2 Tim. 4:3, 4** ESV). *He also said at 2 Corinthians 11:4 that some would come “preaching another Jesus.”*

From the above it is evident that neither Jesus nor the earliest Christians taught or believed that Jesus was a pre-existent being.

FIRST STEP TOWARD THE TRINITY

Once some 2nd century Christians had accepted the concept of pre-existence with reference to Jesus the next stage was that of making it an eternal pre-existence as taught by Origen later in the second century, and finally into the full-blown Trinity in 481 C.E. and onward. However, some Trinitarians try to teach that the doctrine of the Trinity was believed by the earliest Christians. To show that this is not true one only has to consider all the above noted controversial issues and the resulting persecutions.

SUMMARY

If one wishes to posit a Jesus who pre-existed then either:

1. Jesus was really a spirit creature **clothed in** an embryonic human body. He later, at his death, left that human body and returned to heaven. Or:
2. Jesus was really a spirit being who had been **reformed into** an embryonic human and so was a hybrid i.e. part man part spirit but not 100% man. At his resurrection he was then reformed back into a spirit being. Or:
3. Jesus received the life or personality i.e. characteristics of a spirit being.

REASONS THESE ARE UNSCRIPTURAL POSITIONS

Scripturally Jesus is begotten in Mary’s womb. The term ‘begotten’ means that a new life came into existence (Matt 1:18, 20; Luke 1:32, 35; Gal 4:4) and so pre-human existence is impossible. So Jesus is always fully human both from birth and after his resurrection. Go as ‘Father’ begot a human son. Mary ‘conceived’ a child – she did not ‘receive’ a child.

In #1 Jesus is not human at all. It would amount to a **transferring of** a spirit life into Mary’s womb rather than a begetting of a new human life. He would have retained all past knowledge and qualities and so giving him a massive advantage when being tested.

In #2 Jesus would have been a hybrid who was part angel, part human i.e. having two natures and being only half human. This, too, would amount to a **transferring of** a life into Mary’s womb rather than a begetting of a new fully human life. As the growing child’s mind developed he would have begun to recall all past knowledge and qualities and so giving him a massive advantage when being tested and therefore he would not have been tested fairly as a human.

In #3 Jesus was also a hybrid by virtue of his having such characteristics of the spirit being.

.....

APPENDIX

THE SECOND MAN DID NOT EXIST UNTIL THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

➤ “The first man is out of the earth and *made of dust*; the **second man** (Gk *anthropos*) is *out of heaven*” (1 Cor. 15:47).

First Corinthians 15:47 is often wrongly used in an attempt to prove a literal pre-existence of Jesus. This is back-to-front reasoning because:

- The Scriptures never teach that, in about 2 B.C, a **man** (*anthropos*) came from heaven into Mary’s womb.
- Jesus is “the man out of heaven”, the “spiritual” (V. 46), because of the resurrection (vss.45-46), and therefore comes into being much later than at Jesus’ conception.
- Verse 47 is within a chapter that deals with Jesus’ future reign (verse 23-28) and with the resurrection of Christians (verses 35-57) and where verse 49 states that “*we shall bear the image of the heavenly one*” i.e. a future event. So these factors indicate that the event when “the second **man** [will be] *out of heaven*” will occur when Jesus returns at his *parousia* (Dan.7:13; Matt. 24:30, 26:64) after his wait at the right hand of God (Ps. 110:1) “until the times of restoration” (Acts 3:2, 21).

These points are summed up by Professor Emeritus Gordon Fee:

Finally, for Paul now to refer to Christ’s pre-existence and incarnation would be to contradict the very point just made in vv. 45-46, that the *pneumatikos* comes second.

The New International Commentary on the New Testament p.793.

By Raymond C. Faircloth

www.biblicaltruthseekers.co.uk

§