

# Jesus and Christianity:

## Jesus Before His Earthly Ministry

An automobile would probably still be called a car even if its engine had been removed. An old camera, even if it were not loaded with film, would still be termed a camera. Nevertheless, neither of these instruments in such a condition is capable of performing the tasks for which it was designed. Even if the automobile has been freshly painted and polished, and appears to have been only recently taken from the showroom, it cannot operate in a satisfactory manner. Likewise, the old camera, although carried in a beautiful leather case and equipped with an expensive set of lenses, is, without film, as useful for taking pictures as a rock.

Sometimes things can appear to be quite handsome and useful; yet, in reality, they are not, because they have been deprived of one or more components essential to the correct operation of the mechanism. Many people—some being sincere, others being hypocritical; some being religiously inclined, others being carnally inclined—have made of Christianity, whether they realize it or not, a fine car without an engine and a high-priced collectible camera with no film.

There are a number of ways in which this can be and has been done. Several of these work their debilitating effects by denying to Christ, in one form or another, His proper position in God's scheme of redemption. For example, one may make the claim that Jesus was a good man and certainly set an inspirational example for men to follow; but that to suggest that Jesus is deity, that Jesus is the Son of God, is the height of absurdity. We will see that the Bible thoroughly and emphatically refutes such a notion as this. We will do this by considering the nature and position of Jesus before, during, and after His personal ministry on earth. In this article we will discuss the subject: Jesus Before His Personal Ministry. We will notice several verses in Scripture that confirm that Jesus not only existed but also was divine before He ever appeared on this earth.



### Testimony of John

*“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God” (John 1:1-2).* Thus, we learn that the Word, whatever this may be, co-existed with God at the Creation and was in fact deity. Positive identification of the “Word” is made a few verses later: *“And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).* So, the Word is none other than Jesus Himself.

### Testimony of Paul

*“Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped ...” (Philippians 2:5-6).* Two additional facts about Jesus

appear here. First, before He came to earth, He was the same form as God, and second, His divinity was not an inferior sort—He was on an equality with God.

*“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation” (Colossians 1:15).* Jesus is a complete image of God. Jesus is what God had mankind see of what is otherwise invisible to man directly. Just in what sense Jesus is the image of the Father is spelled out in verses 15 through 19. He possesses the divine ability to create and to sustain His creation. He is preeminent over both the temporal and spiritual realms. He has been designated by the Father as the one in whom all the “fulness” should dwell.

We see, therefore, that both John and Paul believed and taught that before Jesus ever set foot in Galilee or Judea, He was God.

### Testimony of Jesus

These men are not alone in this view. Jesus Himself said as much; and who among men would be better able to know than Jesus Himself.

When engaged in a discussion with the Jews about whether or not He had a demon, Jesus said: *“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.”* This statement disturbed the Jews: *“You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?”* Jesus’ reply was designed more to be truthful than to make Him appear unpretentious: *“Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am” (John 8: 56-58).* Had Jesus not been obligated to tell the truth, it would certainly have been to His advantage not to have made such an unusual remark as this; for, we are told, the Jews took up stones to cast at Him (John 8:59).

Finally, let us consider a prayer made by Jesus when He was in the presence of His apostles. They were alone; no multitudes thronged about them. It was evidently dark or nearly dark, since they had concluded their supper (Matthew 26:20), and some of the apostles shortly succumbed to sleep (Matthew 26:40). Jesus, fully realizing that His death was but a few hours away and somberly contemplating the agony that He shortly was to suffer, raised His voice to the Father and said: *“I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do. Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was” (John 17:4-5).*

### Conclusion

These witnesses with one voice declare that Jesus lived before He was ever clothed with the flesh of man and that He was truly deity. This testimony is corroborated by that of Jesus Himself. This witness is only “the tip of the iceberg.”