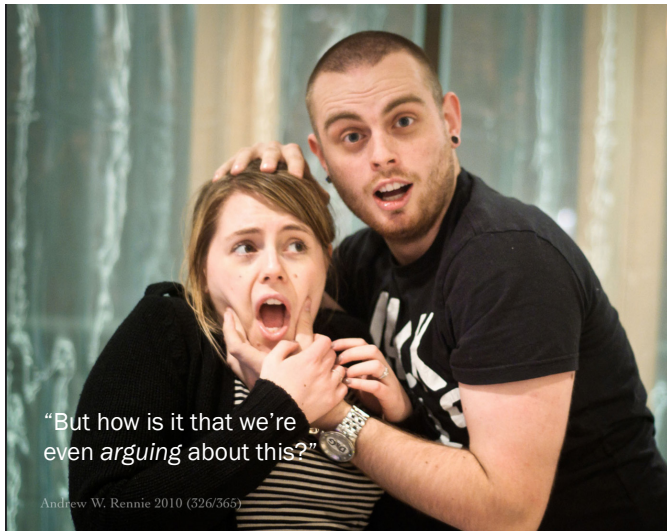




The preexistence of Christ, Part 1.

Defending the second-greatest glory of God's Son.



It seems incredible for it to be necessary to defend the truth of the preexistence of Christ. Just when one thinks that, finally, here is a truth that is so obvious, so plain, so blatantly stated in so many passages of Scripture using the simplest terms in the easiest sentences, that no one could *possibly* object to it—and if they did, what possible motive could they have?—along comes one of our own to insist that, no, Jesus Christ did not exist until He slipped from His mommy's uterus in Bethlehem (*what?!*), and that anyone who believes that Jesus Christ existed before Abraham (John 8:58), that He had a glory with the Father before the world came to be (John 17:5), that He would ascend to where He was formerly (John

6:62), that all is created in Him, through Him and for Him (Colossians 1:16), that He is the Firstborn of every creature (Colossians 1:15), that apart from Him not even one thing came into being which has come into being (John 1:3), that He made the eons (Hebrews 1:3), and that, most importantly, He emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, coming to be in the likeness of humanity (Philippians 2:7)—well, we are told by this individual that it is *we*—the people who believe these things—and not him, who carry the burden of proof on our shoulders. Again I say: *What?!*

The person I am speaking of is Aaron Welch. Aaron is a friend of mine and ordinarily a fine proponent of truth. I've stayed at his home with his wonderful family. Aaron and I are, even now, in email contact concerning these things. He knows that I am writing an article refuting *his* series of articles on this topic. Aaron and I are both mature believers and we realize that this argument (and it is one hell of an argument; there's no middle ground here) is professional and not personal. In no way do we dislike one another. In fact, we like

“Along comes one of our own to insist that, no, Jesus Christ did not exist until He slipped from His mommy's uterus.”

one another very much. But Aaron's series of articles on this topic are, to me, torturous. I am no stranger to scholarly writing, but Aaron breaks an unnecessary and verbose literary sweat contending that, no, Jesus Christ *did not* have a glory with the Father before the world came to be, that He was *nowhere*, formerly, before He was born, that all is *not* created in Him, through Him and for Him, that, no, Jesus Christ *isn't* the Firstborn of



every creature (at least not as is commonly understood by regular-type readers), that *nothing* came into being through Jesus Christ, that He did *not* make the eons and that, no, He never did empty Himself and come to be in the likeness of humanity; how could He have emptied Himself when He didn't even exist? One would *have* to sweat buckets over a keyboard trying to explain away the very apparent meaning of these well-translated passages.

Aaron works way too hard for the wrong cause.

I'm appalled by any attempt to rob Christ of such glories as those described in the aforementioned eight verses. Having said that, I realize that Aaron Welch doesn't see himself as robbing Christ, for he doesn't believe that these glories are Christ's to begin with. (So basically, yes, I take it back; Aaron does rob Christ. He robs Him blind. He breaks into His house and runs off with His most prestigious trophies.) Again, Aaron doesn't believe that Christ, the Son of God, existed until Mary pushed Him through her birth canal into the hands of a midwife in the stable in Bethlehem. To be fair, I suppose that Aaron probably believes that the Son of God began when the holy spirit fertilized the egg clinging to the uterine wall of the world's most celebrated teenage mother. But before that? Nothing. Zip. Zilch. *Nada*. No Christ; no Son of God; no nothing.

MOTIVE

Why would someone work so hard to undo such an easy truth? To tortuously deconstruct and then Scotch-tape back together—into a foreign shape—such plain verses? Why would someone break into Jesus Christ's

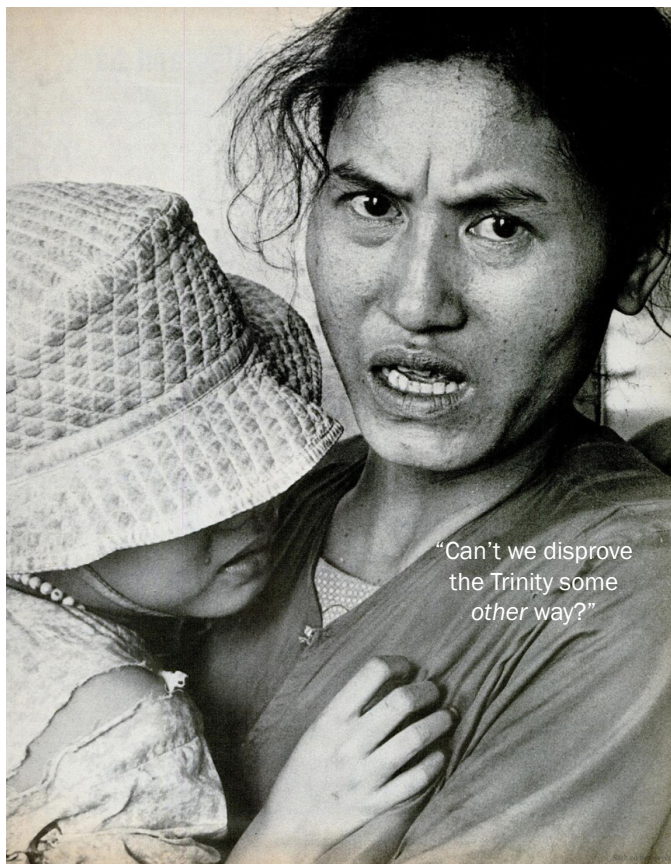
house and plunder His greatest glories? This: Aaron Welch hates the doctrine of the Trinity so badly (I commend him for this), that he seeks to remove from the arsenal of Trinitarians their favorite Exhibit A: the preexistence of Christ. His premier goal, then, is not to disprove the preexistence of Christ, but to take away a key element of Trinitarian teaching. But this is odd to me because it's not as though the preexistence of Christ demands Christ to be a third part of a mystical Trinity, or coequal—in *identity*—with God. We know, certainly, that Jesus Christ is *not* identificationally God, but only representationally so (He is “the Image of the invisible God”—2 Corinthians 4:4). We know that His preexistence prior to Bethlehem does not preclude Him being created by God, that is, being “God's creative Original” (Revelation 3:14). So why work so hard to destroy such a foundational truth when the Trinitarians use it illicitly and illogically anyway? It's like trying to disprove the existence of the lake of fire—which is the second death (Revelation 20:14)—simply because some so-called scholars use it unlawfully to “prove” eternal annihilation.

TORTUREFEST

In my opinion, Aaron tortures the aforementioned eight passages with overthinking, hyperanalysis and excessively strained exposition. He ties the passages to chairs and beats them until they tell him what he wants to hear. But when the passages are untied (I'm going to untie them) and allowed to speak freely within their contexts, they admit that, “We didn't really mean what that guy made us say.” We will look at some of these “proofs.”

This will not be an exhaustive rebuttal. If you ask me, it's pretty crazy that we're even arguing about this in the first place. It's out-and-out ridiculous. Thus, I don't want to spend much time on it. I'm only going to consider the “high” points. I will avoid losing the forest for the trees or, worse, forget what continent we're on. I'm not going to compete with Aaron in analyzing the molecular structure of the bark of the trees, not because I can't, because it's counterproductive. One can certainly overthink and overanalyze a topic, either in the interest of finding some spectacular “new truth,” or in trying to force a square peg theory through a round template of verisimilitude.

I'll keep it simple and plain; this is what you expect of me. It doesn't mean I won't get technical, it just means that I'll say the most that I can in the fewest words. (And I will try not to say “verisimilitude” again.)



JESUS CHRIST; AN EXCEPTIONAL HUMAN BEING

The first part of Aaron's article is titled, "Was Jesus Christ alive before his life on earth began? (Part One)." The best thing that I can do with this premier installment is simply to quote Aaron's summary at the bottom of the article and then comment upon it. Aaron writes:

As a summary of this section, consider the following argument:

1. The person who was given the name "Jesus" and the title "Christ" is said to have been "generated" (gennaō) by God.
2. When referring to an event for which the father of a child was understood as responsible, the word translated "generated" or "begotten" in scripture (gennaō) is to be understood as involving a person's being brought into existence.
3. The person who was given the name "Jesus" and the title "Christ" was first brought into existence by God within the womb of his mother, Miriam, and after he

died was subsequently brought back into existence by God when he was roused from among the dead.

1. If there is a knockout punch for Aaron's position (since he's trying to explain away some easy, straightforward passages, he *needs* a knockout punch), it surely doesn't live *here*. Who will argue that Jesus Christ was generated by God? How is this an argument in favor of the non preexistence of Christ? Bethlehem in 3 B.C was where and when He was generated as an Adamic human. Before that, He was created by God to be His Image: "God's creative Original" (Revelation 3:14). It's no more complicated than this.

2. Needless to say, Jesus Christ is an exceptional human being. Needless to say (except I apparently need to say it), Jesus Christ is the exception to pretty much every rule, but especially the rule of preexistence; He is the only being Who chose to come here. For humans, the word "generated" *is* understood as "involving a person's being brought into existence," because no human being besides Jesus Christ existed before his or her earthly existence. In Jesus Christ's case, He *did* exist before His earthly existence. We know this from the eight verses I listed at the beginning of this article. These verses are written of no one else but Christ. None of them apply to you or to me. This makes Jesus Christ unique. Any verse stating Jesus Christ to be generated as a human being, therefore, makes no comment as to His preexistence in another form.

3. Yes, "the person who was given the name 'Jesus' and the title 'Christ' was first brought into existence by God within the womb of His mother." So? It doesn't matter if He was called "the Son of God," "Jesus Christ," the "Messiah of Israel," or "Nicholas Cage." Again, what He was called when He came into this world speaks nothing to the question of His preexistence. The eight verses I mentioned at the beginning of this newsletter, these are the verses that prove His preexistence.

At the end of Part 1, Aaron writes—

With regards to the question of whether or not Christ was alive before his conception, the burden of proof is, I believe, on those who would disagree with the conclusion of this argument. That Jesus' existence began within the womb of his mother should be the "default" position that is affirmed by the believer unless it can be

shown that scripture clearly and unambiguously reveals otherwise. In order to refute the above argument, compelling evidence from scripture must be provided that proves, beyond a reasonable doubt, that Jesus' life began at some point prior to when he was generated by God within his mother's womb. If this can't be proven beyond a reasonable doubt, then the most reasonable position to take is that Jesus' existence began when he was generated by his Father.

It is hard to believe that Aaron wrote this. "The burden of proof," he writes, "is, I believe, on those who would disagree with the conclusion of this argument." Really? *This* argument? The preceding three points? *That* argument? But the preceding three points prove only that Jesus was generated upon Earth as an Adamic human being and named "Jesus." This was the beginning of His existence as an earthbound, Adamic human, and not His absolute beginning as the Image of God through Whom all things have come. Speaking of verses that "clearly and unambiguously" reveal His absolute beginning, how about the eight verses I listed at the beginning of this newsletter? These verses establish more than "beyond a reasonable doubt" that Jesus' life began "at some point prior to when He was generated by God within His mother's womb." Here are the verses again:

- ▶ Jesus Christ existed before Abraham (John 8:58),
- ▶ He had a glory with the Father before the world came to be (John 17:5)
- ▶ He would ascend to where He was formerly (John 6:62)
- ▶ All is created in Him, through Him and for Him (Colossians 1:16)
- ▶ He is the Firstborn of every creature (Colossians 1:15)
- ▶ Apart from Him not even one thing came into being which has come into being (John 1:3)
- ▶ He made the eons (Hebrews 1:3)
- ▶ He emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, coming to be in the likeness of humanity (Philippians 2:7)

After these eight verses, Aaron Welch still looks for "compelling evidence from Scripture"? How many more compelling arguments could one desire?

On to Aaron's Part 2, which is titled, "Was Jesus Christ alive before his life on earth began? (Part Two)"

"WE ARE FOREKNOWN AND CHRIST WAS FOREKNOWN, THEREFORE..."

Aaron makes the argument that because Christ was said to be foreknown (1 Peter 1:20) and members of the body of Christ are also said to be foreknown (Romans 8:29), that therefore Christ did not exist before His birth because *we* did not exist before *our* births. Well, hmm. The commonality of being foreknown should not get anyone too excited that they and Jesus are running in the same race. I am pretty sure that dinosaurs, raisins, redwood trees, snowblowers, underwire bras and French's mustard were also all foreknown.

Keep in mind that Jesus Christ, being the Firstborn of all creation and having been generated upon the Earth by the spirit of God rather than by sperm, is *waaaaay* different than us; this is the obvious, helpful truth that people like me are able to point out to you. Remembering this simple truth will keep you from wrong conclusions resulting from wandering the trails of zany-footed rabbits. We were all foreknown, yes—us and Jesus and French's mustard—but only one of us created the eons, brought all things into existence, lived before Abraham, and emptied ourselves by taking flesh—and it wasn't us or French's mustard. Calling upon the commonality of foreknown-ness as a springboard to say that "because we did not exist, neither did Christ" is like saying that, "because Jack Nicholson and I both eat breakfast, therefore I starred in *The Shining*."

JESUS CHRIST AS NEW MODE OF PROPHET

Aaron Welch believes that Hebrews 1:1 proves that God never spoke through the Word (through the pre-incarnate Christ) until He spoke "in the last of these days...in a Son." In other words, God never spoke through His Image until that Image became flesh. Here's the passage purported to say this, from Hebrews—

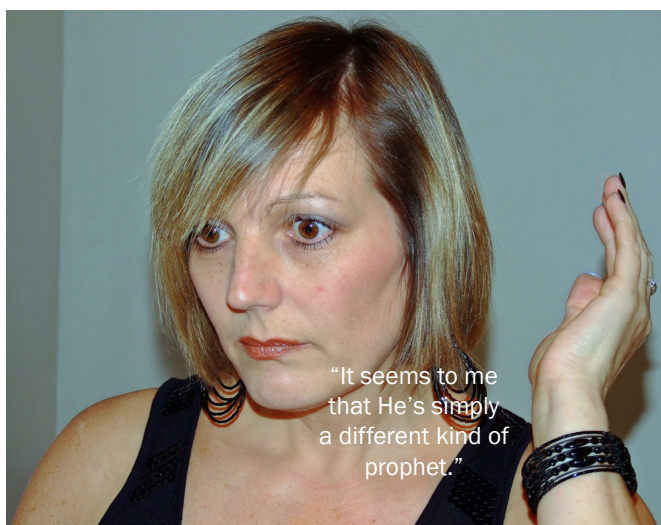
By many portions and many modes, of old, God, speaking to the fathers in the prophets, in the last of these days speaks to us in a Son, Whom He appoints enjoyer of the allotment of all, through Whom He also makes the eons (Hebrews 1:1-2).

Aaron writes—

The "last of these days" does not refer to any time prior to when Christ was "generated" by his God and Father.

This means that any celestial being speaking on behalf of Yahweh at any time prior to when Christ was generated by God (and which some Christians have claimed or suggested was the “pre-incarnate Christ” speaking to people) was, necessarily, not the Son of God.

Context will cure us of this erroneous conclusion. Here, Jesus Christ is related to the prophets. He is the latest prophet. He is a new prophet. Nothing is being said here about the many ways He may have expressed Himself



before taking flesh. What *is* being said here is: Never before becoming flesh had the Image of God spoken to humanity in the form and manner of a prophet. The writer of Hebrews is here announcing a new portion and mode (“type”) of prophet. Yes, here is a *new* mode (not “of old”), that has not been seen or heard of before—*Son of God as prophet*. The prophets of old were not Sons of God, they were sons of regular people. So here was a new thing; a new portion, a new type of spokesperson for God. Here was a prophet Who *was* the very Son of God. The “many portions” and “many modes” of speaking to people “in the prophets” has just been expanded. There is a new type of prophet in town (am I making myself clear?), and it is *Son of God as prophet*. This is the simple announcement of Hebrews 1:1-2. To deduce from this that the Image of the invisible God never manifested Himself in any other mode before becoming as one of the prophets is, therefore, a mistaken conclusion.

The Son of God—as *prophet*—had come to fruition. Consider these verses—

Acts 3:22-24

Moses, indeed, said that: “A Prophet will the Lord your God, be raising up to you from among your brethren, as me. Him you shall hear, according to all, whatsoever He should be speaking to you. Yet it shall be that every soul whatsoever which should not hear that Prophet shall be utterly exterminated from among the people.” Now all the prophets also, from Samuel, and consecutively, whoever speak, also announce these days.

Luke 7:16

Now fear got all, and they glorified God, saying that “A great prophet was roused among us!” and that “God visits His people!”

John 6:14

The men, then, perceiving the sign which Jesus does, said that “This truly is the Prophet Who is coming into the world!”

Mark 6:15

But others were saying, “He is Elijah “ And others were saying, “He is a prophet, *like one of the prophets of old.*”

Here’s an analogy that may help you to understand Hebrews 1:1-2—

By many modes, and for a long time, American leadership has spoken to us through the President. Today it speaks to us through Donald Trump.

In the above example, the subject is the presidency of the United States and the different kinds (modes) of presidents that have, through the years, walked upon the American stage. It is being stated here that Donald Trump is a new kind of president in an old line of individuals holding that office. Trump is being compared to the other modes (“types”) of president—and nothing else. Trump is the first businessman with no prior political experience to assume this office; this would be the point. In Hebrews 1:1-2, Jesus Christ is compared to the other modes of prophets; the point is that He is the first (and only) Son of God to become a prophet.

Such a specific statement as my analogy above, concerning Donald Trump, could obviously never be used as a proof text to show that, before he became President of the United states, Donald Trump was never a businessman. In fact, it precludes such a possibility. The

shock of the point is that he *was* a businessman (rather than a politician) and now he's president. Yet Aaron Welch attempts to use Hebrews 1:1-2 to do, concerning Christ, what I insist is impossible to do, that is, prove that Jesus Christ never existed before Bethlehem. Ah—but the passages has nothing to *do* with that, does it. No, it doesn't.

But besides all of this, the writer of Hebrews, in order to make sure that no one such as Aaron Welch could mistakenly conclude from this “speaking as a prophet” business that the Image of the invisible God never spoke before or in any other way *besides* that of a prophet, finishes Hebrews 1:1-2 with: “...through Whom He also makes the eons.” Aaron never mentions this part of the verse, in this context. Obviously (to most people, anyway), a Being Who “created the eons,” would have necessarily existed before His manifestation in flesh in Bethlehem (which occurred *during* the eons) and thus before being appointed a prophet in a long line of mere Adamic spokespeople.

GOD AS THE SOLE CREATOR OF THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH— *RELATIVELY SPEAKING*

Aaron makes a big deal out of God saying that He created the universe “all alone” and “by Himself”—and other such phrases. By this, Aaron attempts to prove that all created things did *not* come into existence through Jesus Christ—even though John 1:3 and Colossians 1:16 and 1 Corinthians 8:6 clearly state that they did. *If God acted alone*, suggests Aaron, *then how could God have created the universe through Christ?*

Once again, Aaron overlooks context. Additionally, he overlooks viewpoint. The context in all of the verses cited by Aaron in his attempt to disassociate Christ from creation, show God comparing Himself to small “g” gods and human beings. Aaron misses this. The viewpoint is the relative viewpoint, not the absolute, a fact that he also misses. God acting “alone” is a relative statement; God acted alone in relation only to foreign gods who may have claimed to have assisted Him—or been responsible for it themselves—but didn't. He acted alone in relation to human beings helping Him. He certainly did not act alone in respect to His creation of all through Christ.

We speak frequently of doing thing “all by ourselves.” Someone asks, “Did anyone help you make that piece of pottery?” and you say, “No, I made it alone. I did it all by myself. No one helped me.” It's true. A member of

the body of Christ standing by and hearing you say this, however, might comment, “How can you say that? You are *never* alone. Jesus Christ is with you. The spirit of God makes its home in you. It is God Who is operating in you to will and to work for the sake of His delight.”

Of course all of that is true. But this is the absolute viewpoint. As such, it's a given. The context in this example of making the pottery is the question of whether or not any other *person* helped you. The viewpoint is the relative viewpoint—our immediate relation to other people.



None of Aaron's verses showing God making the world “alone” eliminate the fact that God made the world through Christ. Christ is the channel through which God does everything, including create the universe (1 Corinthians 8:6). God acted alone only in the sense that no foreign element (this is the context) assisted Him. (His Image, Jesus Christ, is certainly no foreign element.) Let's look at all the passages Aaron cites, and observe the greater context.

Acts 17:24

Here, Paul claims that “God made the world and everything in it.” Does this prove that God did *not* make the world through Christ? No. In fact, this same Paul states elsewhere (1 Corinthians 8:6) that, “Nevertheless for us there is one God, the Father, out of Whom all is, and we for Him, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, *through Whom all is*, and we through Him.” To show you that even here there is a comparison made to the possibility of other deities pitching in, Paul directly precedes this statement with, “For even if so be that there are *those being termed gods*, whether in heaven or on earth, even as there are many gods and many

lords, nevertheless for us there is one God, the Father” (1 Corinthians 8:5-6). Even in the midst of multiple gods, Paul states that there is only one God. If God can be said to be “the only God,” even in the midst of multiple deities, then surely He can be said to have created the world “alone,” even while creating it through Christ.

God made the world through Christ (1 Corinthians 8:6; Colossians 1:16; John 1:3). Can it still be said that God, Himself, made the world? Of course: God Himself operated through Christ to make the world. Speaking again of my pottery example, God operated in me to make the pottery. Can it still be said that I made the pottery “by myself”? Yes—when comparing me (the relative viewpoint) to other people and the possibility of them assisting me.

Matthew 19:4, et al.

Aaron writes—

Similarly, Christ himself appears to have been completely unaware that anyone other than God, the Father, had anything to do with the creation of the universe. Whenever Christ referred to the creation event recorded in Genesis, he gave God—whom he referred to in the third person—full credit for it (Matthew 19:4; Mark 10:6; 13:19).

Certainly, Christ was not “completely unaware” that anyone “other than God” had “anything to do with the creation of the universe.” In Matthew 19:4, for instance, it is not Christ’s intention to brag about or even mention His role as the channel of all creation. This would have been the most ludicrously-timed and counter-productive thing He could have said, especially when addressing the Pharisees. Here’s the passage—

And the Pharisees came to Him, trying Him, and saying, “Is it allowed one to dismiss his wife for every cause?” Now He, answering, said, “Did you not read that the Maker from the beginning makes them male and female” (Matthew 19:3-4).

That Aaron would use this as a “proof text” arguing for the non-preexistence of Christ surely demonstrates the desperation of his argument. What *should* Christ have said?

Did you not read that God and I, from the beginning, make them male and female? I remember that day. You



should have seen Me there by the banks of the Euphrates, forming Adam from the soil with my bare hands. I looked at him lying there inert and I said, ‘Now *that’s* good!’ Then I made Eve and I’m like, “Holy Toledo, I think I just outdid Myself!”

This isn’t the only time that Jesus Christ would play dumb. On the road to Emmaus on the day of His resurrection, Jesus Himself walked with two disciples, yet their eyes were held so that they did not recognize Him. Jesus asked what they had been talking about, and they told Him of the life and death of the One Whom they’d hoped would be the Messiah of Israel. They were mourning His death, yet amazed at the story from some of their own, that He had been seen alive. Playing dumb as to His role as the subject of the conversation, Jesus speaks of Himself in the third person, saying—

O foolish and tardy of heart to be believing on all which the prophets speak! Must not the Christ be suffering these things, and be entering into His glory?” And, beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, He interprets to them, in all the Scriptures, that which concerns Himself (Luke 24:25-27).

Jesus interprets to the disciples concerning Himself, yes, but He does so by cloaking Himself—referring to Himself in the third person—as though He were not that person.

Dragging and dropping Aaron Welch’s logic from the Matthew 19 passage into this one, would Aaron be so bold as to write the following?—

Similarly, Christ himself appears to have been completely unaware that He was the very One of whom the

disciples en route to Emmaus were speaking. Whenever Christ refers to the events of His death and resurrection, He gives credit to “the Christ” and not to Himself. That Jesus Himself gives “the Christ” full credit for the events of the recent Passover, proves that the man walking with the disciples was not the Christ.

Because of Luke’s illuminating aside to the reader concerning the identity of the speaker, Aaron wouldn’t and couldn’t write this way concerning *this* particular passage. That Jesus, because of expedience, sometimes either withheld information or played dumb, does not and should never be used to “prove” that either 1) He actually *is* dumb, or 2) He actually had nothing to do with the events in question—either the making of the world or the drama of that memorable Passover.

In the Luke passage, we get a behind-the-scenes look at the truth of the matter when the writer, Luke, says in the following aside, “He interprets to them, in all the Scriptures, that which concerns Himself.” Jesus, of course, withheld this tidbit from the two disciples. A similar aside might have been inserted into the Matthew 19 passage, but wasn’t. Had Matthew taken Luke’s tack, he might have written this in 19:3-4—

And the Pharisees came to Him, trying Him, and saying, “Is it allowed one to dismiss his wife for every cause?” Now He, answering, said, “Did you not read that the Maker from the beginning makes them male and female?” And, when He said, ‘Maker,’ He spoke to them that which concerns Himself and His mediatory role in the creation of the world, with God.

Had this been inserted, Aaron wouldn’t have a leg to stand on. His argument still limps badly, however, for the insertion of Christ’s “channel-hood” in the creation of the world comes elsewhere, namely in 1 Corinthians 8:6, Colossians 1:16, and John 1:3

Isaiah 45:12

I (Yahweh) made the earth and created man on it; it was my hands that stretched out the heavens, and I commanded all their host.

Again, Aaron uses a verse showing God using the personal pronoun “I” to attempt to prove that God did not create the world through Christ. And remember, Aaron does *this* to prove that Christ did not exist before Bethlehem, and he does *that*, recall, to remove from

the Trinitarians their precious Exhibit A. (By the way, no one needs the supposed non-preexistence of Christ to dismantle the Trinitarian argument. There are so many other Scriptural—and therefore true—ways to do that, such as insisting upon the death of Christ.)

I told you that Aaron Welch misses the context of verses such as Isaiah 45:12, and also the viewpoint. The context here is God eliminating the possibility that the creation came via a competing, small “g” god; the viewpoint is the relative viewpoint. Here’s the context, in Isaiah 46:5-10—

“To whom would you liken Me
And make Me equal and compare Me,
That we would be alike?
6 “Those who lavish gold from the purse
And weigh silver on the scale
Hire a goldsmith, and *he makes it into a god*;
They bow down, indeed they worship it.
7 “They lift it upon the shoulder and carry it;
They set it in its place and it stands there.
It does not move from its place.
Though one may cry to it, it cannot answer;
It cannot deliver him from his distress.
8 “Remember this, and be assured;
Recall it to mind, you transgressors.
9 “Remember the former things long past,
For I am God, and there is no other;
I am God, and there is no one like Me,
10 Declaring the end from the beginning,
And from ancient times things which have not been done,
Saying, ‘My purpose will be established,
And I will accomplish all My good pleasure.’

Isaiah 48:13

My hand laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand spread out the heavens; when I call to them, they stand forth together.

Does God’s use of the pronoun “My” and not “We” (speaking of Himself and Christ) prove that God did not create the earth through Jesus Christ? No. It only proves that God is out to convince Israel, through Isaiah, that all of their false gods are worthless. Here is the greater context, in Isaiah 48:3-5—

“I declared the former things long ago
And they went forth from My mouth, and I proclaimed them. Suddenly I acted, and they came to pass.
4 “Because I know that you are obstinate,

And your neck is an iron sinew
 And your forehead bronze,
 5 Therefore I declared them to you long ago,
 Before they took place I proclaimed them to you,
 So that you would not say, ‘*My idol has done them,*
And my graven image and my molten image have com-
manded them.’

Ignoring the context, Aaron cherry-picks a passage that, at first glance, seems to support his contention that God acted apart from Christ to create the world. But we are not those who settle for the first glance. We are not those who ignore context and viewpoint. I could isolate Luke 24:26 from its context to “prove” that Jesus didn’t even know that He was the Messiah. I could isolate Genesis 3:9—which has God asking the first man, “Adam, where are you?”—from its context to “prove” that God doesn’t know everything. Doing either thing would obviously be both foolish and fallacious. Yet it is equally foolish and fallacious to insist that, because God speaks of Himself in certain passages and in certain contexts as acting alone, that therefore He did not create the world through Christ.

Isaiah 66:1-2

Thus says Yahweh: “Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest? All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be,” declares Yahweh.

This time, the context ignored by Aaron sits squarely within the very passage he quotes. Rather than relating Himself to false gods, here God relates Himself to those presuming themselves to be builders. God is saying, “You think that *you* are builders? Ha! *I* made heaven and earth.”

God is not attempting, in this passage, to explain the detailed mechanics of how He created the world through His Image. He is merely relating (the relative viewpoint) His creative prowess with that of humanity; *they* didn’t do it, *He* did. Honestly, it’s this simple. If you want verses proving that God created the world through Christ, then a passage where God is merely comparing Himself to humans is not the place to find it. Rather, one must venture over to definitive, absolute passages such as John 1:3, Colossians 1:16, and 1 Corinthians 8:6.

Psalms 33:6, 9

By the word of Yahweh the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host...For he [Yahweh] spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm...



Here is the least convincing verse of all. Yahweh gives the word and breathes—and the world is created through His appointed channel (1 Corinthians 8:6) and through His appointed Image (2 Corinthians 4:4), and through the personified Word (John 1:3)—created for this very purpose: Jesus Christ. If these passages (Psalm 33:6, 9) do not specifically state the fact that either I or Aaron believe underlies them (I see God channeling creation—by His “breath” and His “voice”—through Christ; Aaron does not), then neither Aaron nor I can use these passages from the Psalms as proof texts. I will say, however, that I *do* forward proof texts supporting my conviction concerning He Who has become God’s breath and voice (God, literally, has neither breath nor voice; He operates all through His appointed image—2 Corinthians 4:4), whereas Aaron does not.

Isaiah 44:24

Thus says Yahweh, your Redeemer, who formed you from the womb: “I am Yahweh, who made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself...”

Before I print and deconstruct Aaron’s comments on this passage, I’ll bring you the context of Isaiah 44:24—well, I would, but it’s too lengthy. It’s too lengthy because the entirety of chapter 44 concerns Israel building and

worshipping idols. It is as I said before: God is distinguishing Himself—in all of these “I acted alone” passages—from small “g” gods. God writes concerning relative rather than absolute truth. It is not His goal, in any of these passages, to lift the curtain and take anyone behind the scenes of creations to show them the nuts and bolts of *how* He created the world; of *how* He did everything through His appointed Image and Channel, Christ, “through Whom all is (1 Corinthians 8:6). He is merely saying: “I did it and not them.”

Here are just a few highlights from chapter 44, which Aaron once again cherry-picks (choosing only one verse) to suit his purpose—

▶ Verse 8: “You are My witnesses; Is there an Eloah apart from Me? There is no other Rock; I know none.”

▶ Verse 9: “The formers of a carving, all of them are ineffectual, and their coveted idols bring no benefit.”

▶ Verse 10: “Who would form an el, and fabricate a carving to no benefit?”

▶ Verse 15: Indeed he shall make an el and worship; he makes it a carving and shall fall down to it.

There is much more. As I said, God dedicates the entire chapter to the topic of false gods (“el” in the Hebrew) and those who worship them. Here is verse 17—

And the remainder of it he makes into an el; his own carving! To it he shall fall down, and he shall worship and pray to it, and say: “Rescue me, for you are my el.”

On and on it goes. Read the entire chapter for yourself. Yet Aaron quotes only a single verse in this passage, having isolated it and wrested it from an overwhelmingly relative context—transmuting it into an absolute statement—in the hopes of supporting his theory concerning a God Who



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created without Christ. Here is Aaron Welch on Isaiah 44:24—

If Yahweh had wanted to communicate the fact that he created everything directly and without anyone else’s involvement, I’m not sure what more he could have said to more clearly express this fact than is stated in the above verse. It is evident that only one person was speaking these words, and the words “alone” and “by myself” rule out any sort of intermediary agent used by the person speaking to accomplish the creation of the heavens and the earth. If the one speaking is to be understood as Yahweh himself, then he created everything without the involvement or aid of Jesus Christ. If it was Jesus Christ speaking, then he created everything without the involvement or aid of his God and Father. Since the latter is clearly impossible, then we must understand God, the Father, to have been the sole creator of the heavens and the earth.

Now that I have taught you to fish, you, the reader, can plainly detect for yourself the many false conclusions hastened upon here in a statement that ignores both context and viewpoint.

Aaron: “If Yahweh had wanted to communicate the fact that he created everything directly and without anyone else’s involvement...”

Yahweh is indeed wanting to communicate the fact that He created everything directly and without “anyone else’s” involvement. However, the “anyone else” *of the context* are other deities (small “g” gods), and *not* the Image through Whom God accomplishes all things.

“It is evident that only one person was speaking these words.”

Yes, true—but so what? God is speaking relatively, not absolutely, just as I am speaking relatively, not absolutely, when I say, “I made this pottery all by myself.”

“The words ‘alone’ and ‘by myself’ rule out any sort of intermediary agent used by the person speaking to accomplish the creation of the heavens and the earth.”

The words “alone” and “by myself” rule out no such thing, any more than the words, “Adam, where are you” rule out God knowing everything” (1 John 3:20), or than Christ referring to Himself in the third person (Luke 24:26) rules out His realization that He was the Messiah of Israel Who had just been crucified and raised from the dead.

“If the one speaking is to be understood as Yahweh himself, then he created everything without the involvement or aid of Jesus Christ.

This is an assumption based on an ignorance of the relative viewpoint. This statement assumes the *absolute* viewpoint, which—based on context—it most certainly is not. This is no less of an assumption than that which—upon hearing me say, “I made the pottery alone,”—would insist that, “Martin Zender claims to have created his pottery without the involvement or aid of God; I just heard him use the pronoun ‘I.’”

And on it goes.

ELOHIM CREATED THE HEAVENS
AND THE EARTH

Aaron Welch—

But what about the plural “us” found in Genesis 1:26-27, 3:22 and 11:7? Some see the word “us” as a “veiled reference” to either a multi-personal God (consisting of Father, Son and Holy Spirit) or to God and a pre-existent Son (who was either directly or indirectly involved in the creation of humanity and the confusing of humanity’s language at Babel). However, I don’t think that either Moses or the original readers of this book understood the “us” to imply either a multi-personal God or a pre-existent Son of God.

A more likely interpretation of these verses is that God was speaking to, and on behalf of, the celestial members of his heavenly court.

Yes, great question: what *about* the plural “us” found in Genesis 1:26, 3:22 and 11:7? Not only that, but what about the opening statement of Scripture, Genesis 1:1—

In a beginning Elohim created the heavens and the earth.

“Elohim,” we know, is the plural of “El,” meaning “Subjector,” the title with which God refers to Himself in the Hebrew Scriptures. This verse, along with the “Us” verses referenced by Aaron, prove that God created the heavens and the earth through an Intermediary (or Intermediaries)—all of whom carry the capital “E” prefix, “El”—and who therefore operate in perfect accordance to the will of the invisible God Who, Himself, has neither hands nor lips nor literal breath.

“Some see the word ‘us’ as a ‘veiled reference’ to either a multi-personal God (consisting of Father, Son and Holy Spirit) or to God and a pre-existent Son (who was either directly or indirectly involved in the creation of humanity and the confusing of humanity’s language at Babel).

Yes. I am among those who see the word “us” as a veiled

reference to a preexistent Son who was, indeed, directly involved in the creation of humanity. What other conclusion could one reach? Here is the absolute viewpoint that Aaron has been straining for in the midst of so many relative statements and yet, here, when he actually *has* an absolute viewpoint, he explains it away by saying, “a more likely interpretation of these verses is that God was speaking to, and on behalf of, the celestial members of his heavenly court.”

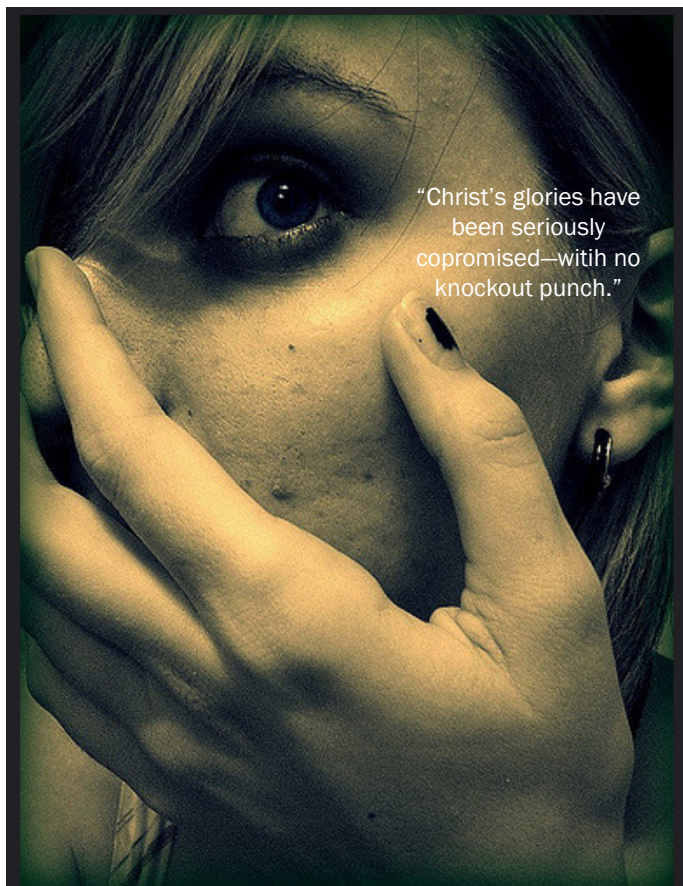
How can Aaron interpret this as proving his contention and not mine? If God is speaking either to or on the behalf of “other celestial members of His heavenly court,” what prevents this from suggesting that He creates the heavens and the earth primarily through His Image, but also through other Elohim employed



by that Image? I don’t get it. Not only is this odd explanation of “Us,” “We” and “Elohim” not a knockout punch disproving Christ’s involvement in the creation of the heavens and the earth, one could easily tweak it to prove the very opposite thing.

* * *

The teaching of the non-preexistence of Christ is



a terrible teaching. It's embarrassing. It's Christ-lowering, robbing Him of His second most noble sacrifice (the first being His obedience unto death, even the death of the cross), namely, the voluntary forsaking of His heavenly glories to taste of the Adamic condition. The teaching of the non-preexistence of Christ ranks right "up there" with eternal torment, free will, the trinity, the immortality of the soul, the Acts 28:28 theory (the claim that half of Paul's letters don't belong to the body of Christ) and the teaching that even atheists can become members of Christ's body simply by marrying a believer, as the worst teachings of all time. (Of these, eternal torment, free will, the trinity and the immortality of the soul are the lowest of the low. But these others are surely "up there" among the lowly.)

Forwarding the teaching of the non-preexistence of Christ is a lot of erroneous work for an erroneous prize. It's like breaking into Michael Phelps' home (as opposed to knocking politely), stealing a dozen of his twenty-three Olympic swimming gold medals and saying, "These don't belong to you." The video evidence is in: Phelps earned the medals. The Scriptural evidence is in: Christ forsook His celestial glories to become an Adamic human. He emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave. Why would anyone

want to break in and purloin this treasure when the evidence sits so plainly before us? Why break so violently into clear, well-translated proof texts (ignoring context; ignoring viewpoint; assuming; inferring) when the plain meaning of the proof texts are so obviously satisfying?

(More on Aaron's tortured interpretation of Philippians 2:7-8—" [Christ] nevertheless empties Himself, taking the form of a slave, coming to be in the likeness of humanity, being found in fashion as a human"—next week.)

To prove the non-preexistence of Christ requires a knockout punch that would override the obvious sense of the eight well-translated passages that I have cited throughout this article. One certainly must come with more than cherry-picked verses that ignore both context and viewpoint. One certainly must come with more than over-interpreted similarities between Christ and the rest of humanity. One must come with Scripture void of assumption and inference. Aaron Welch, arguing for the non-preexistence of Christ, never rises to this standard. Not only are there no knockout punches here, but Aaron's fighter is not even dressed appropriately for the ring.

I am coming down hard on Aaron and this teaching because of the seriousness of the error. When it comes to the glories of Christ, there is no room for ambivalence or doubt. My charge from Christ is to "expose, rebuke and entreat, with all patience and teaching" (2 Timothy 4:2). I believe that I have exercised patience, even while teaching with a big stick.

To Aaron: I pray that once you realize your interpretive mistakes, you will recant this evil teaching. It is no shame to say, "I was hasty," or "I was wrong." In fact, such a confession would only heighten the respect you now deservedly enjoy among the ecclesias. In the meantime, the burden of proof is not upon us, Aaron, but upon you.

And after two lengthy articles, that burden is still there.

To the rest of you: Next week, unfortunately, more of the same. —MZ

To my readers:

Thank you for remembering my labors in this evangel. I never require contributions, but I have never turned one down. If anyone would like to help me keep doing this, you may contribute anything you like at the following link: http://martinzender.com/donation_mz.htm
To those who have contributed to this work, THANK YOU FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART! —MZ

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