

# Philippians Series

Lesson #042

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Dean Bible Ministries

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# Eternity of Christ; Plurality in the Godhead Philippians 2:5–11





## **We have learned:**

- 1. Php. 2:5–11 was written in context to provide an example of humility and serving one another which is stated in Php. 2:1–4.**
- 2. That Christ Jesus preexisted His incarnation as undiminished deity. Php. 2:6**
- 3. At the Incarnation God the Son did not surrender or give up any divine attribute, or anything essential to deity. Such a surrender would not have been possible.**

# ESSENCE OF GOD

**Sovereign**

**HOLY**

**Omniscience**

**Righteousness**

**INFINITE**

**Omnipresent**

**Justice**

**Omnipotent**

**Love**

**Veracity**

**Eternal Life**

**Immutability**

- 4. God the Son voluntarily restricted the use of His divine attributes to solve the problems, temptations, and challenges He faced in His humanity, and veiled the manifestation of His eternal glory.**
- 5. However, though the visible manifestation of His glory was veiled, the glory of His Person was made manifest through His words and works.**

**John 1:14, “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.”**

## **2. Who was Jesus Before He Came?**

**Php. 2:6, “who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,” [NKJV]**

**Php. 2:6, “who, though He already existed eternally in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,” [NKJV]**

**ὑπάρχω *huparchō*  
present active participle  
anarthrous adverbial  
concessive participle,  
“although existing eternally”**

**ἡγέομαι *hēgeomai*  
aorist middle indicative  
deponent 3S  
“to engage in an  
intellectual process,  
think, consider, regard”**

**At a point in the distant past, Christ Jesus existed continuously in the form of God. At some point He considered that full form of God was not something to be grasped after. But what was this full form?**

## **2. What was Jesus When He Came?**

**Php. 2:7, “but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.” [NKJV]**

**When He came He took on, or added to Himself, true humanity, but something was “poured out” or limited, or restricted. What was that?**



**Php. 2:7, “but willingly limited Himself by taking the form of a servant/slave, and coming in the likeness of men.”**  
**[RD]**

**ἀλλά; *alla*,  
“But,”  
strong contrastive  
conjunction**

**κενόω *kenoō*,  
aorist active  
indicative 3S  
“to make empty, to  
empty, to render  
void; to divest  
Himself” ~BDAG**

**Christ performed the  
action on Himself**

**ἑαυτοῦ; *heautou*,  
reflexive pronoun  
accusative  
masculine 3S  
“Himself”**

***Kenosis* is the  
cognate noun**

**Php. 2:7, “but willingly limited Himself by means of receiving the form of a servant/slave, and coming in the likeness of men.” [RD]**

**ἀλλά; *alla*,  
“But,”  
strong contrastive  
conjunction**

**λαμβάνω *lambanō*  
Aor act part masc sing  
nom to take, receive,  
choose;  
an adverbial ptcp of  
means.  
“By MEANS of receiving  
”  
...**

**κενόω *kenoō*,  
aorist active  
indicative 3S  
“to make empty, to  
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**1. The Son of God willingly veiled His preincarnate glory by restricting the outer appearance and privileges of God in order take on the form and function of a finite human body.**

**Jn. 17:5, “And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.” [NKJV]**

**2. Christ willingly submitted to the Father's will to restrict the use of His divine attributes in relationship to the tests, temptations, and struggles He faced in His incarnation.**

**Heb. 10:5, “Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: ‘*Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me.*’**

**Heb. 10:6, “ ‘*In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure.*’**

**Heb. 10:7, “ ‘*Then I said, “Behold, I have come—In the volume of the book it is written of Me—to do Your will, O God.”*’ ” [NKJV]**



# Who was Jesus before He came?

## Understanding Who God is: Unity and plurality

### Did Jesus pre-exist creation? And if so, is He eternal?

#### Distinguish preexistence from eternality of Christ

- Passages which indicate His eternality
- Passages in the Old Testament which teach His preexistence
- Passages which predict the coming of the Messiah
- Passages which indicate His humanity
- Passages which indicate His Deity
- Passages in the Gospels which indicate His humanity and His Deity
- Passages in the Epistles which indicate His humanity and Deity (The Arian Controversy, Council of Nicea)

# The Unity of God



# The Unity of God

## 1. God is One. God is One, He is a unity.

**Deut. 6:4, “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!”**

**אֶחָד *’echad* masc sing abs card one (m), a unity of**  
**This word occurs 960 times as a noun, adjective, or**  
**adverb, as a cardinal or ordinal number, often used in a**  
**distributive sense. It is closely identified with יָחַד *yachad***  
**“to be united”**

#### **4. Theologically God must be a unity.**

**Infinity implies unity. God is infinite in His being. There cannot be two or more infinite beings. Having more than one infinite is impossible, any more than there can be two Alls, or two everythings, or two infinities, such as God and the universe. Therefore the universe cannot be infinite.**

# The Plurality

**There were basically two options:**

**Option 1: Dynamic Monarchianism (or adoptionism), which is the heresy of unitarianism: God the Father infused or imparted deity to Jesus at some time during His life on the earth. This denies the absolute or undiminished deity of Christ saying that Jesus was a human endowed with divine powers.**



**The word does not mean an absolute singularity!**

**Judg. 20:8, “So all the people arose as one man, saying, ‘None of us will go to his tent, nor will any turn back to his house;’ ”**

**Ex. 26:6, “And you shall make fifty clasps of gold, and couple the curtains together with the clasps, so that it may be one tabernacle.”**

**Gen. 2:24, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”**

## **2. This *oneness* of God means three things:**

**God is a unity: there is not more than one God.**

**God is a simplicity: there are not two or more parts in God.**

**God is a Triunity: there are three Persons with the nature of being one God.**

### **3. Biblical basis for God's unity**

**Gen. 1:1, “In the beginning God [*Elohim*] created the heavens and the earth.”**

**Isa. 44:6, “Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: ‘I am the First and I am the Last; Besides Me there is no God.’ ”**

**Isa. 45:18, “For thus says the LORD, Who created the heavens, Who is God, Who formed the earth and made it, Who has established it, Who did not create it in vain, Who formed it to be inhabited: ‘I am the LORD, and there is no other.’ ”**



# The Plurality

- 1. The word *trinitas* was coined by Tertullian in the late second century. There is only one God existing in three Persons.**

## **Biblical Basis for Plurality in the Godhead**

**Isa. 59:20, “ ‘The Redeemer will come to Zion, and to those who turn from transgression in Jacob,’ says the LORD.”**

## Biblical Basis for Plurality in the Godhead

**Isa. 48:16, “Come near to Me, hear this: I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; From the time that it was, I was there. And now the Lord GOD and His Spirit have sent Me.”**



## Biblical Basis for Plurality in the Godhead

**Isa. 59:21, “ ‘As for Me,’ says the LORD, ‘this is My covenant with them: My Spirit who is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants, nor from the mouth of your descendants’ descendants,’ says the LORD, ‘from this time and forevermore.’ ”**

## **Biblical Basis for Plurality in the Godhead**

**Isa. 63:9, “In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His Presence saved them; In His love and in His pity He redeemed them; And He bore them and carried them all the days of old.”**

## Biblical Basis for Plurality in the Godhead

**Isa. 63:10, “But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit; So He turned Himself against them as an enemy, and He fought against them.”**

## **New Testament Passages on Plurality**

**Matt. 28:19, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,”**



## **New Testament Passages on Plurality**

**2 Cor. 13:14, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.”**

## **New Testament Passages on Plurality**

**Matt. 3:16, “When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him.**

**Matt. 3:17, “And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’ ”**

## Old Testament Passages on Pre-Existence

**Isa. 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,  
Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace.”**

## **Old Testament Passages on Pre-Existence**

**Psa. 2:2, “The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against His Messiah, saying, ...”**

**Psa. 2:5, “Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, and distress them in His deep displeasure:**

**Psa. 2:6, “ ‘Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion.’**

**Psa. 2:7, “ ‘I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, “You are My Son, today I have begotten You.” ’ ”**



**Rom. 1:4, “and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”**

## Old Testament Passages on Pre-Existence

**Mic. 5:2, “ ‘But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.’ ”**

## Old Testament Passages on Pre-Existence

**Mic. 5:2, “ ‘But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.’ ”**

**Ex. 3:14, “And God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM.’ And He said, ‘Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, “I AM has sent me to you.” ’ ”**

## **New Testament Passages**

**John 1:1, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”**

**John 1:2, “He was in the beginning with God.”**

**John 1:3, “All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.”**

**John 1:4, “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.”**

**John 1:5, “And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.”**

**John 1:14, “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.**

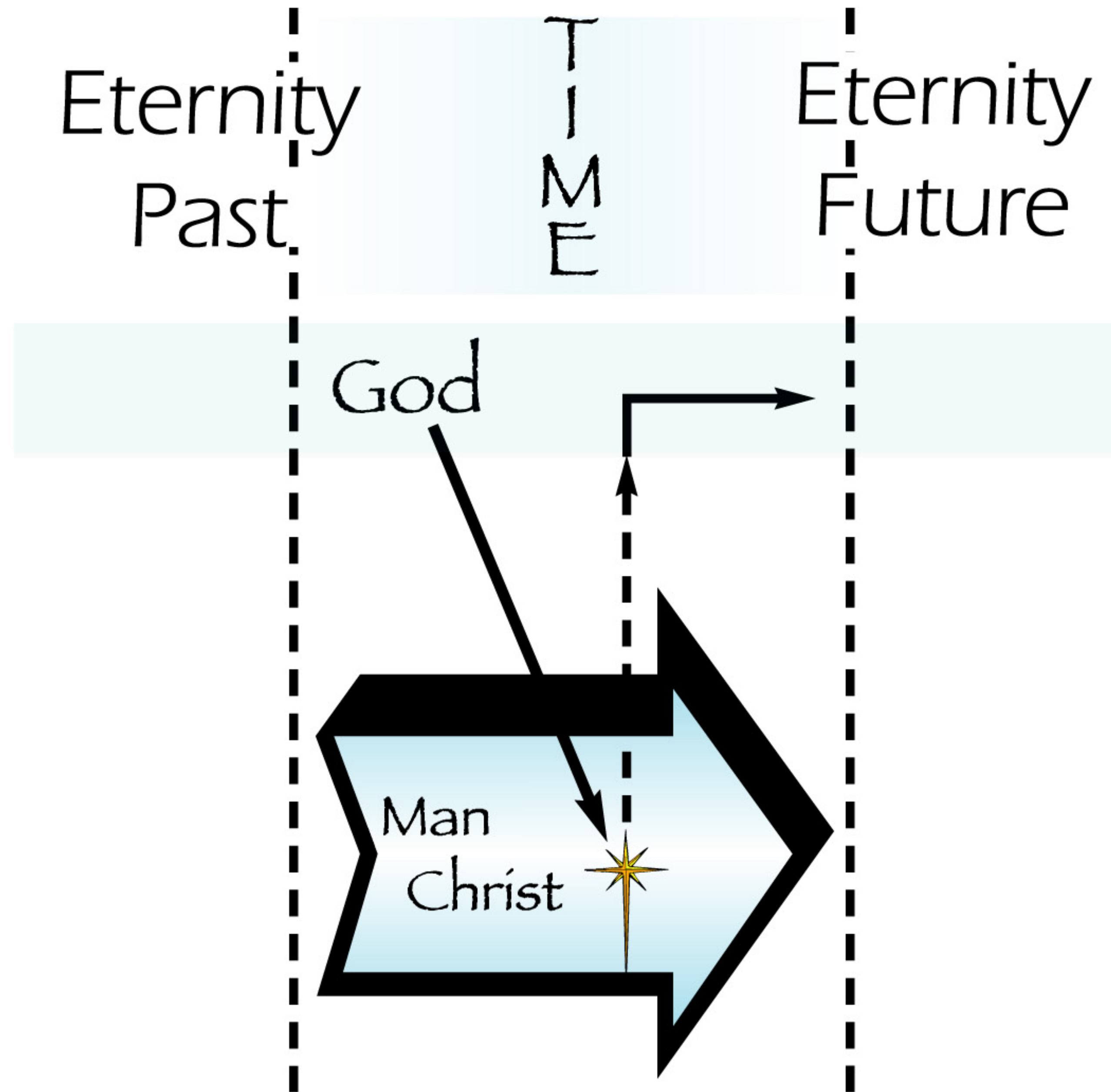
**John 1:15, “John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, ‘This was He of whom I said, “He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.” ’ ”**



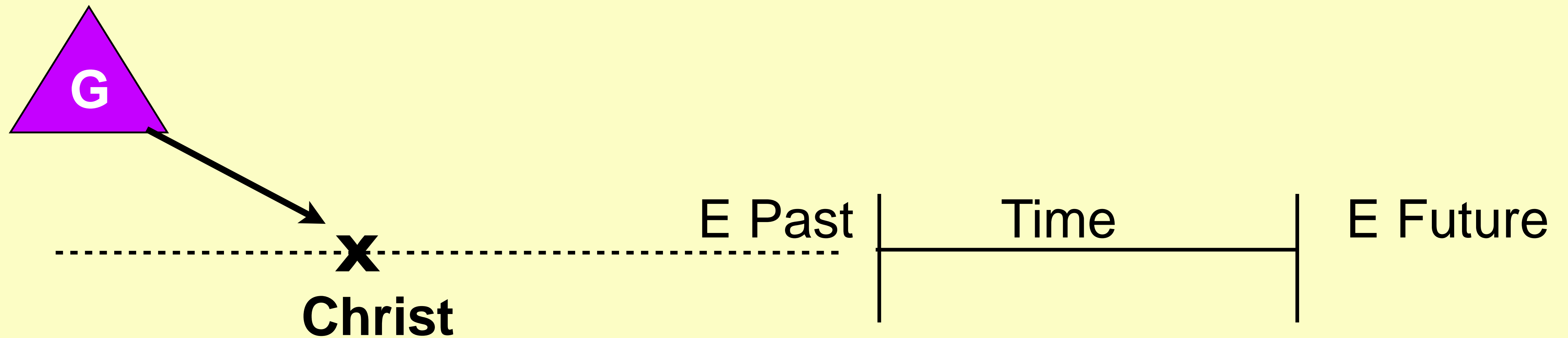
**Col. 1:16, “For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.**

**Col. 1:17, “And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.”**

# Adoptionism: An Attempt to Explain Christ



**Arianism: A form of dynamic monarchianism is Arianism, which explained the relation to the Father by saying the Son was created in eternity past. Thus the Son was not full deity.**



**2. If Christ is eternal, then He is not dependent upon another for His existence, and is in fact self-existence. Self-existence is essential to undiminished deity as seen in the name of YHWH, I AM THAT I AM, Ex. 3:14**

**Ex. 3:14, “And God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM.’ And He said, ‘Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, “I AM has sent me to you.” ’ ”**

### **3. As God, Jesus possesses all of the attributes of deity.**

**This would include Infinity. Last time under the discussion of God's Unity I made the following point:**

**Theologically God must be a unity.**

**Infinity implies unity. God is infinite in His being, there cannot be two or more infinite beings. Two or more infinite beings, having more than one infinite [being] is impossible, any more than there can be two alls, or two everythings, or two infinities, such as God and the universe, therefore the universe cannot be infinite.**