

# How did Jesus Pre-exist?

Jesus was of God, his origins were of old, his existence was from "before the earth ever was" because, as John explains, he was the Idea which was in the beginning, the divine Idea through which the heavens and the earth were created, and for which all things exist.

In this sense his existence is before everything else, because everything (the Universe) was formed for him and through him. This is a profound spiritual, physical and literal truth that goes far beyond common mis-conceptions of Pre-existence. Jesus Christ preceded the creation of the Universe because he was the cause of its creation, the fundamental reason for its existence in a very similar sense that a child's cot is designed and built expressly for a baby that is yet to be born, or that the Sydney Opera House was conceived, designed and constructed for the expression of art yet to be created.

As a literally and physically real person (ie, in the concrete sense that most people regard as "real", ie, "in the flesh") it is evident that Jesus had no conscious existence as a person until after Mary conceived some 2000 years ago (earth time). He grew from a baby through childhood and into adulthood, and **learnt**<sup>1</sup> obedience in the experience of his suffering. His creation and perfection involved a process of time and events, just like you and I, and so for him the world was made the way it is...as it is for us also if we are "in him".

The difficulty that early theologians had with passages like John 1 which caused them to develop a "Pre-existence" theology was the human tendency to think in concrete terms, to think that for something to be "real" it is of necessity physical, concrete, or in the flesh. As someone once said, "I know it is real because I can kick it."

So when the Bible speaks of Jesus as coming down from heaven, of being from before the world was, and as of a Creator for whom the heavens and the earth were the work of his fingers, limited human minds assume a

<sup>1</sup> Hebrews 5:8 "though He was a Son, yet He **learned obedience** by the things which He suffered."

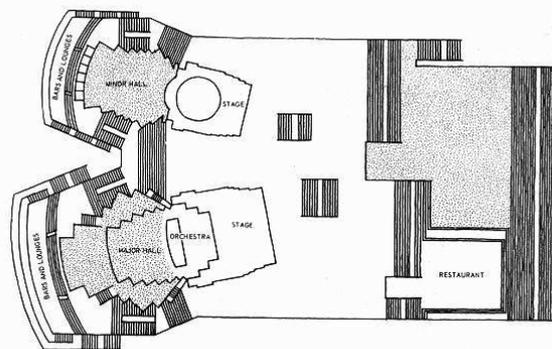
personal and physical pre-existence of Jesus is what must be implied. In so doing they miss the most profound thing about both their own existence, the appearance of Jesus and for that matter the creation of the entire Universe.

What they miss is the importance and power of **an Idea**.

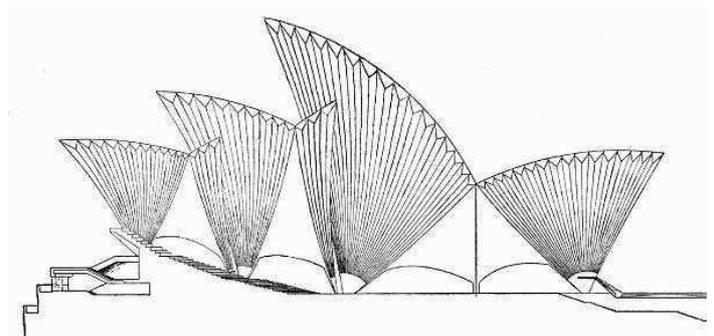
Let's go back to the Sydney Opera House. Today I can visit it, walk around it, sit inside it and climb over the top of it.



Today the Sydney Opera House is a concrete reality that I can kick, a physical icon of Australia to the whole world. But it wasn't always so. For many years those soaring concrete sails were but sketches of ink on paper.

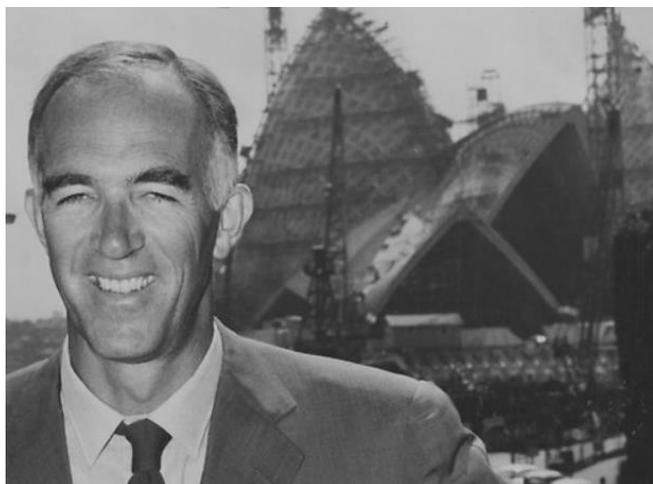


And many years before that, its arching vaults were but a gleam in the eye of its architect.



The Sydney Opera House was nothing more than **an Idea**.

Today, looking at the concrete reality it is easy to forget the importance of the idea, and the importance of the mind behind the idea. Jorn Utzon was undoubtedly an architectural genius even if his ideas were difficult to translate into concrete realities.



But were it not for his unique mind and the unique ideas of this unique mind, then the Sydney Opera House as we know it would not exist. I would not be able to walk around it, sit in it, marvel at it, much less kick it...or if I could, it would be in something very different. Sydney Opera Houses do not just appear because cement trucks can mix concrete.

And so it is for any special creation.

The idea precedes the concrete reality.

The idea is translated into sketches.

The idea inspires fellow minds.

The idea determines the schedule.

The idea obtains the materials.

The idea forms the concrete.

The idea is translated into concrete reality.

The idea is the beginning.

The concrete is the end.

In the beginning was the idea.

The idea was with Jorn Utzon.

The idea was an expression of the mind of Jorn Utzon.

And the idea was made concrete, the Sydney Opera House.



And the Idea was made flesh, Jesus Christ the Son of God.

The Idea was translated into the sketches we see in the Old Testament, in the law and the prophets.

The Idea inspired the minds of the faithful of old.

The Idea determined the history of the earth, raised up kings and nations, brought floods and famines, blessings and curses.

The Idea formed the heavens and the earth, the mountains and the valleys, the moon and the stars, and all that in them is.

The Idea brought forth people and formed them for his name.

Everything that is and has been and will be is through this Idea.

The Idea **was** Christ.

And John's other point was that **we** (apostles) have actually seen him, we have talked to him, we have touched him, we have handled him, we have eaten with him, we have seen him crucified, we have seen him raised from the dead, we have seen him ascend on high!

John had actually seen the concrete reality, the Idea of God from before the beginning, seen the Son of God in the flesh.

John appeals to the human limitation of only taking concrete realities seriously by emphasizing his personal experience with the flesh and blood reality of Jesus Christ. But the drama and importance of seeing Christ in the flesh is only meaningful because he was the Idea that founded the entire Universe from the beginning, the Anointed Son of God, and easily the most amazing thing ever to happen in the history of the earth...and so in Christ the Idea has been fulfilled, and we have hope that the Idea works.

And to those of us who will hear him he has given the power to likewise become sons of God...and so fulfil the Idea in a multitude.

So perhaps this will also explain why Jesus could say with perfect gravity, "Before Abraham was, I am". He was indeed. Abraham was formed for Christ. Abraham's existence (like Adam's) was for Christ. Abraham was

called out from Ur for Christ. And God could swear to Abraham by his very own self-existence that the promise (the Idea) would be fulfilled because, as John 1 says, the Idea **was** God. As surely as God exists his Idea will see its fulfilment, his mind will be expressed, his word will go forth and it will surely achieve its purpose. So when we see Christ we see God, for "how can you say show us the Father when you have seen me?" Jesus Christ was such an exact replica of God, such an exact copy of the mind of God, his character and personality such an spark of the divine, that for us he effectively is God.

Furthermore, if we take heed to his word then we too will be part of the divine Idea, we too will have characters and personalities that replicate the divine, we too will be one with God. This has always been God's agenda and Idea from the beginning.

So the apparent "pre-existence" language that appears from time to time and causes such confusion of thought in popular theology is the language of ideas and thoughts, of mind and character and personality. John Thomas would say they are the language of God Manifestation. They are statements of the reality, importance and force of divine ideas and relationships which have energized and created both all the physical and concrete scaffolding that the lesser human mind is commonly constrained to, along with the formation of higher spiritual Godly characters within such lesser human beings that the scaffolding was formed for.

*Jonathan Pogson*