

A BIBLICAL EVALUATION OF *THE UB*  
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PART IV: What Does *The UB* Say about Jesus?

“Even God and man can coexist in a unified personality, as is so exquisitely demonstrated in the present status of Christ Michael—Son of Man and Son of God.”  
(0:5.3)

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**“Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, “I am the Christ,” and will deceive many.”**  
(Jesus Christ, Matthew 24:4-5)

The Deity of Christ

As discussed in the previous section, *The UB* presents Jesus not as God the Son, the Second Person of the Triune Godhead as depicted in the Bible, but as a spiritual offspring of the Eternal Son (the second of the three Gods that make up the tritheistic Paradise Trinity) and the Universal Father (the first of the three Gods of Paradise). Jesus of Nazareth is portrayed in *The UB* as the mortal incarnation of one of these created beings called “Creator Sons” (Paper 21) or “Michael Sons” (20:5.2). The Creator Sons are the “creators” of a local cosmic realm called a “local universe,” which comprises up to 10,000,000 inhabited planets. Upon completing seven “bestowal” missions by incarnating as a mortal indigenous to each of seven different inhabited worlds within their own “local universe,” the Creator Sons become rulers therein, of which no less than 100,000 comprise the Milky Way Galaxy and each of six other inhabited galaxies or “superuniverses” as they are called. The Creator Sons are eventually paired with a Daughter Spirit (a.k.a., the “Holy Spirit”), another category of created spirit creature that is spawned by the Infinite Spirit (the third God of Paradise). Each celestial pair serves as co-rulers of their respective “local universe,” the Creator Son serving as head of the celestial monarchy. Our “local universe,” called Nebadon, is ruled by Jesus of Nazareth who, upon completion of his seventh bestowal mission on planet Urantia (ca. 7 B.C. – 30 A.D.), earned his place among the pantheon of Gods within the inhabited superuniverse known as Orvonton (i.e., the Milky Way Galaxy). He now reigns on Salvington, planetary headquarters of Nebadon and one of a special category of planets known as “architectural worlds,” and is counted among the other 700,000 Creator Sons that rule as Gods of their respective local universes.

Although this fantastic notion of many Christs who rule different parts of the galaxy sounds appealing to fans of science fiction, the Bible contradicts this idea by stating that *all* things were created through Jesus (John 1:1-5) and that *all* things consist through Him (Colossians 1:17). Jesus is referred to as “God” in some portions of *The UB* (in the context that he is a member of the polytheistic pantheon), but ultimately Jesus of *The UB* was created at a point in time. He is not absolute deity, and he certainly is not the Eternal Son (also called the Original Son), the second God of Paradise, who is above Jesus in the celestial hierarchy:

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“When the fullness of absolute spiritual ideation in the Eternal Son encounters the fullness of absolute personality concept in the Universal Father, when such a creative union is finally and fully attained, when such absolute identity of spirit and such infinite oneness of personality concept occur, then, right then and there, without the loss of anything of personality or prerogative by either of the infinite Deities, there flashes into full-fledged being a new and original Creator Son, the only-begotten Son of the perfect ideal and the powerful idea whose union produces this new creator personality of power and perfection.” (21:1.1)

“Our Creator Son [Jesus] is not the Eternal Son . . . . Michael of Nebadon is not a member of the Paradise Trinity. . . . Because of the name associated with his seventh and final bestowal on Urantia, he is sometimes spoken of as Christ Michael.” (33:1.2,1)

“Had the New Testament writer referred to the Eternal Son, he would have uttered the truth when he wrote: ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made’ [John 1:1,3]. . . . On your world, . . . this Original [Eternal] Son has been confused with a co-ordinate Creator Son, Michael of Nebadon, who bestowed himself upon the mortal races of Urantia.” (6:1.3,5)

The last passage cited above denies that Jesus is the Word of God referred to in John 1:1 and instead applies that title to a different God of higher standing (i.e., The Eternal Son of Paradise; cf. 6:2.2). And yet, other passages affirm that Jesus of Nebadon is indeed the “Word of God” (cf. 10:3.3; 20:5.1; 128:1.2; 128:1.10; 153:3.2). This confusion notwithstanding, *The UB*’s portrayal of “Jesus” (a.k.a. “Michael of Nebadon”) is heretical in that it denies His true absolute deity, making Jesus a created being who came into existence at a point in time. While *The UB* denies that Jesus existed eternally, the Bible clearly teaches that Jesus is truly eternal (cf. Micah 5:2; John 1:1; 8:58; 17:5,24; Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 7:3; Revelation 22:13).

In this way, *The UB* mimics non-Christian cults, such as Jehovah’s Witnesses and Mormons, that occasionally call Jesus “God,” but when it comes down to asking what they mean by this term, they will not credit Jesus Christ with absolute and true deity. Throughout the entire content of inspired Scripture the fact of Christ’s identity is clearly taught. He is revealed as Jehovah God in human form (Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; Micah 5:2; John 1:1; 8:58; 17:5; cf. Exodus 3:14; Hebrews 1:3; Philippians 2:11; Colossians 2:9; Revelation 1:8,17,18). But *The UB* openly attempts to deny the validity of this position: “. . . as did his fellow apostles, Paul confused Jesus, the Creator Son of the local universe, with the Second Person of Deity, the Eternal Son of Paradise” (104:1.11).

*The UB* denies the uniqueness of Jesus Christ by making Him only one among 700,000 other “Sons of God.” But in a strange contextual twist of John 3:16, *The UB* attempts to refurbish the “uniqueness” of the Creator Sons by stating that “each Creator Son is different from every other; each is unique in nature as well as in personality; each is the ‘only-begotten Son’ of the perfect deity ideal of his origin” (21:0.1). The apparent intent here is to align John 3:16 in harmony with the concept of many “only-begotten” sons. However, it is plainly obvious that *The UB* uses this term “only-begotten Son” interchangeably as needed to suit different purposes; for it is the Eternal Son who is referred to as the “original and only-begotten Son of God” (6:1.1; cf. 10:1.4). So sometimes “only-begotten” means “one-and-only,” and sometimes it means “many that are unique,” depending on the subject. The Bible, however, makes it

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clear that it means “one-and-only” when referring to Jesus. The Greek word for “only begotten” is *monogenes*, which means “only-born,” i.e., “sole.”<sup>1</sup>

### The Humanity of Christ

*The UB* claims at first that Jesus was both human and divine, just as the Bible states. However, from a biblical point of view, to be divine can only mean to be God. The Jesus of *The UB*, on the other hand, was only divine in that his humanity was coupled with the Creator Son known as Michael of Nebadon, a spirit creature, which imparted deity to Jesus by virtue of *The UB*'s polytheistic precept. A passage near the end of *The UB* attempts to blur this distinction by reversing a historic landmark decision:

“Christianity owes much, very much, to the Greeks. It was a Greek, from Egypt, who so bravely stood up at Nicaea and so fearlessly challenged this assembly that it dared not so obscure the concept of the nature of Jesus that the real truth of his bestowal might have been in danger of being lost to the world. This Greek’s name was Athanasius, and but for the eloquence and the logic of this believer, the persuasions of Arius would have triumphed.” (195:0.18)

Despite the validity of this historic footnote, *The UB* does not oppose, but in fact *supports* Arius’s position, which is historically referred to as “Arianism.” Arius’s position was that, instead of Jesus having existed eternally as was being taught by bishop Alexander of Alexandria and others during the early fourth century, Christ must be numbered among the created beings—highly exalted, to be sure, but a creation, nonetheless. The debate became heated over the years that followed, until it came to the attention of Emperor Constantine, who called for the Nicene Council in 325 to resolve the issue once and for all. The group headed by Arius represented the viewpoint that Christ was of a different substance (Greek: *heteroousios*) than the Father, that is, that He is a creature. The orthodox group, led by Alexander and to which Athanasius belonged, represented the view that Christ was of the same substance (*homoousios*) as the Father, that is, that He has eternally shared in the one essence that is God and in full deity. Alexander’s position won out, and Arius had been declared a heretic. Historic Christianity does indeed owe much to Athanasius for holding steadfast to the truth, as it is revealed in Scripture (see Micah 5:2; John 1:1; 8:58; 17:5,24; Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 7:3; 13:8; Revelation 22:13). However, *The UB* holds the opposing view.

### The Incarnation of Christ

The “Incarnation” of Jesus is described in *The UB* as follows: “Joshua ben Joseph [Jesus son of Joseph], the Jewish baby, was conceived and was born into the world just as all other babies before and since *except* that this particular baby was the incarnation of Michael of Nebadon, a divine Son of Paradise and the creator of all this local universe of things and beings” (119:7.5; emphasis original). The same passage continues to say that this “mystery of the incarnation of Deity within the human form of Jesus” that is “otherwise of natural origin on the world” will forever remain “unsolved” because it is a divine “secret” known only by those who have experienced it (*ibid.*). The “Incarnation” of Jesus is further described in *The UB* as the “appearance in and on your world, by apparently natural processes . . .” (120:4.5). Joseph is called “the human father of Jesus” (122:1.1). In other words, *The UB* holds that Jesus was conceived through normal human sexual reproduction, Joseph being the biological father of Jesus. This contention is a blatant contradiction of the biblical record (Matthew 1:18-25), which states that Jesus was conceived supernaturally by the Holy Spirit.

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Not only is the Incarnation of Jesus of Nebadon on planet Urantia not congruent with the biblical record, but it seems Jesus of *The UB* had prior incarnations. Jesus, or “Christ Michael” as he is referred to in *The UB*, is said to have incarnated no less than six separate times prior to his seventh and final incarnation on Earth. Each of these prior incarnations or “bestowal missions” were as different life forms on several different planets, each of which were in descending levels of existence. The purpose of these incarnations was to give the Creator Son of our local universe a sense of sympathetic understanding toward the struggling evolutionary creatures of his domain. This experience prepares the Creator Son so that he may be wise and compassionate as sovereign ruler. A Creator Son does not earn his position of Local Universe Sovereign until all seven bestowals are successfully completed:

“Michael of Nebadon had bestowed himself six times after the similitude of six differing orders of his diverse creation of intelligent beings. Then he prepared to descend upon Urantia in the likeness of mortal flesh, the lowest order of his intelligent will creatures, and, as such a human of the material realm, to execute the final act in the drama of the acquirement of universe sovereignty in accordance with the mandates of the divine Paradise Rulers of the universe of universes.” (120:0.2)

The belief in intelligent life on other planets is a basic tenet of *The UB*. Although the Bible is silent regarding the habitation of other planets, the Bible does portray Christ as being solely God before taking on flesh (John 1:1,14). The theory of previous incarnations for Jesus is therefore incongruent with the biblical account.

### The Virgin Birth of Christ

Because Jesus was conceived through natural relations between Joseph and Mary as *The UB* contends, he was not born miraculously of a virgin (see citation of 119:7.5, above). Consequently, angelic appearances were the only supernatural events connected to the conception and birth of Jesus:

“At first Joseph had doubts about the Gabriel visitation. . . . How could the offspring of human beings be a child of divine destiny?” (122:3.2)

“Gabriel’s announcement to Mary was made the day following the conception of Jesus and was the *only event of supernatural occurrence* connected with her entire experience of carrying and bearing the child of promise.” (122:3.4; emphasis added)

But behold, for certain superminds of the heavenly realm apparently cannot corroborate each other’s story. According to a prior testimony, it was an altogether different celestial visitation that was the “only” supernatural event associated with the birth of Christ:

“Certain wise men of earth knew of Michael’s impending arrival. Through the contacts of one world with another, these wise men of spiritual insight learned of the forthcoming bestowal of Michael on Urantia. And the seraphim did, through the midway creatures, make announcement to a group of Chaldean priests whose leader was Ardnon. These men of God visited the newborn child [in the manger].<sup>2</sup> The *only supernatural event* associated with the birth of Jesus was this announcement to Ardnon and his associates by the seraphim . . . .” (119:7.6; emphasis added)

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The Star of Bethlehem is also refuted with similar aplomb, ascribing the event to what would have surely been a rather lackluster conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn that was later aggrandized through folklore (122:8.7).

But let us get back to the issue of Jesus' Virgin Birth. The Gospel accounts clearly denote that Jesus was born of a virgin. Matthew declares that Joseph did not have sexual relations with Mary until after she gave birth to Jesus (Matthew 1:25). Luke also states that Mary was a virgin when she conceived (Luke 1:27, 34). Matthew's account ascribes this miraculous event as fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy (Matthew 1:22-23), citing Isaiah 7:14: "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son . . ." The *UB* authors, on the other hand, provide us with a literary critique of this passage: "Even the passage, 'a maiden shall bear a son,' was made to read, 'a virgin shall bear a son'" (122:4.4). But once again, celestial exegesis has proven sloppy. The prophecy of Isaiah 7:14 is said to have been corrupted and applied to Jesus sometime after His birth. The *UB* authors are indeed on to something, in that the Hebrew word for "virgin" in this verse is *alma*, which *could* refer to a young woman who has not yet given birth, or a maiden. But when the Jews translated the Old Testament into Greek about 250 B.C. (the Septuagint), they used the word *parthenos* to translate *alma* in Isaiah 7:14. The word *parthenos* means a true virgin. This undertaking is the only known candidate event referred to by the *UB* authors that could have resulted in "changing" the word's meaning. Did the Jews take undue license when translating this vital word? It makes no sense that the ordinary pregnancy of a maiden (which is the status of all women prior to their first child) could qualify as a sign from God! Furthermore, the translation from Hebrew to Greek in 250 B.C. hardly qualifies for "tampering" with the passage sometime after the birth of Jesus. The only way the *UB* authors' story makes sense is if the "tampering" took place *after* Jesus' birth, not before.

### Jesus and the Old Testament

*The UB* contends that Jesus did not fulfill the Old Testament messianic prophecies, as the New Testament claims. Nor did Jesus believe he was the Messiah for that matter, according to *The UB*. The New Testament supposedly misapplied the messianic prophecies to Jesus to make him *appear* to be the Messiah. One such messianic prophecy, Isaiah's prophecy of a virgin who would bear a son, has been dealt with above. We will now deal with other aspects of the messianic role. First, we take a look at the *UB* perspective:

" . . . he [Jesus] was sometimes tempted to look with favor on the possibility of his becoming the Messiah of Jewish expectation, but he never yielded to such a temptation." (126:0.3)

"He knew he was not to become the expected Jewish Messiah . . ." (127:1.7)

"He had thoroughly considered the idea of the Jewish Messiah and was firmly convinced that he was not to be that Messiah. . . . He knew he would never sit on the throne of David at Jerusalem. Neither did he believe that his mission was that of a spiritual deliverer or moral teacher solely to the Jewish people. In no sense, therefore, could his life mission be the fulfillment of the intense longings and supposed Messianic prophecies of the Hebrew scriptures; at least, not as the Jews understood these predictions of the prophets. Likewise he was certain he was never to appear as the Son of Man depicted by the Prophet Daniel." (126:3.6)

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The *UB* authors have no choice but to claim that the apostles were deluded about Jesus as Messiah because this teaching runs throughout the New Testament. The very prophecies that *The UB* says Jesus allegedly did not believe in are applied to Jesus in the New Testament. In direct contradistinction to the above claim is that Jesus would indeed sit on the “throne of his father David” that was spoken by the angel Gabriel to Mary (Luke 1:32). In the *UB* version of this passage (122:3), Gabriel’s mention of the throne of David is curiously missing. Also, Peter’s announcement that Jesus is the Messiah, and specifically that Jesus was descended from David and would sit on David’s throne, was made on the Day of Pentecost when Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:29-31). In the *UB* account of Pentecost, Peter does indeed “preach the new message of a risen Messiah” (194:1.1), but Peter’s efforts and those of the other apostles are viewed as erroneous (194:0-3). In fact, Peter is looked upon as a confused zealot:

“Peter persisted in making the mistake of trying to convince the Jews that Jesus was, after all, really and truly the Jewish Messiah. Right up to the day of his death, Simon Peter continued to suffer confusion in his mind . . . .” (139:2.13)

But if we are to accept this notion, we must dismiss the testimony given by three of the four Gospel accounts which indicate that not only did Peter confess that Jesus was the Messiah, but that Jesus accepted his confession as true:

“Simon Peter answered and said, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ Jesus answered and said to him, **‘Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.’**” (Matthew 16:16; cf. Mark 8:29; Luke 9:20)

In *The UB*’s rendition of these passages, the word “Christ” is replaced with “Deliverer” (157:3.5), in spite of the fact that the celestial identity of Jesus of *The UB* is that of “Christ Michael.” It appears, then, that the title “Christ” is bandied about throughout *The UB* only as convenience warrants and as obfuscation dictates. His celestial name may be Christ Michael, but he surely is not the Christ! Such ambiguity is hardly worth taking seriously.

In regards to the notion that “Jesus” viewed the messianic prophecies as pertaining to “a spiritual deliverer or moral teacher solely to the Jewish people” (126:3.6), the “Jesus” of *The UB* apparently does not know his scriptures well enough. A quick look at the passage pertaining to the “Son of Man” in Daniel will demonstrate that it does not speak of an exclusively Jewish rulership:

“I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that *all peoples, nations, and languages* should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed.” (Daniel 7:13-14, emphasis added; see also Hosea 2:23; Zechariah 9:10; 14:16)

This messianic passage clearly indicates that the kingdom did not apply “solely to the Jewish people” but would affect all nations, all peoples, and all languages. It is apparent, then, that the Jesus of *The UB*

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is wallowing in ignorance on matters pertaining to the very messianic prophecies he is supposedly denying! Either that, or the *UB* authors are attempting to set up a faulty straw man argument.

And this “ignorance,” whether it be feigned or not, does not apply only to Jesus of *The UB*, but is demonstrated by the *UB* authors themselves as they attempt to drive their point home. In their final commentary regarding the angelic visits to John the Baptist’s mother Elizabeth (122:2; cf. Luke 1:5-25, 39-45), Mary, and Joseph (122:3,4; cf. Matthew 1:18-25, Luke 1:26-38), we read this declaration:

“In all these visitations nothing was said about the house of David. Nothing was ever intimated about Jesus’ becoming a ‘deliverer of the Jews,’ not even that he was to be the long-expected Messiah. Jesus was not such a Messiah as the Jews had anticipated, but he was the *world’s deliverer*. His mission was to all races and peoples, not to any one group.” (122:4.2; emphasis original)

This statement makes sense only when one reads the pertinent passages in *The UB* (122:2-4) without consulting the appropriate Gospel passages. In order to sell this pitch, the *UB* authors had to strike all references to the house of David and Jesus’ messiahship from the appurtenant Gospel passages. Consequently, *The UB*’s rendition of the Gospel accounts read altogether differently. The angel who appeared to Joseph announced: “‘And she [Mary] will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for *He will save His people from their sins*’” (Matthew 1:21; emphasis added). And when the angel Gabriel visited Mary, he said:

“‘And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name *Jesus*. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and *the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David*. And He will *reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.*’” (Luke 1:31-33; emphasis added)

Clearly these passages, spoken by the visiting angels, indicate that Jesus was of the house of David, that He would be the deliverer of the Jews, and that His messianic kingdom would last forever. And by implication through the fulfillment of several messianic prophecies (i.e., the Virgin Birth [Isaiah 7:14], the Son of God [Psalm 2:7], the Davidic throne [Jeremiah 23:5], the house of Jacob [Numbers 24:17], and the messianic kingdom [Isaiah 9:7]), Gabriel was announcing that Jesus was indeed the anticipated Messiah. And this is precisely why these passages are stricken or reworked in the *UB* versions thereof.

But we must at least give credit to the celestial authors for their persistent (if not ambivalent) play on semantics. Let us perchance read on:

“Most of the so-called Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament were made to apply to Jesus long after his life had been lived on earth. . . . [M]any figurative passages found throughout the Hebrew scriptures were subsequently misapplied to the life mission of Jesus. Many Old Testament sayings were so distorted as to appear to fit some episode of the Master’s earth life. Jesus himself onetime publicly denied any connection with the royal house of David. . . . The early followers of Jesus all too often succumbed to the temptation to make all the olden prophetic utterances appear to find fulfillment in the life of their Lord and Master.” (122:4.4)

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This claim that Jesus was not the Messiah fails to observe that the Hebrew word “Messiah” is interchangeable with the Greek word “Christ,” both of which mean the “Anointed One.” The New Testament records that the apostle Andrew told his brother Simon Peter, ““We have found the Messiah’ (that is, the Christ)” (John 1:41). We may safely say that every biblical statement that Jesus is the Christ is also an affirmation that Jesus is the Messiah. For example, “These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ” (John 20:31). Even the *UB* authors themselves are aware of this interchange of meaning between “Christ,” “Messiah,” and “anointed one,” as several passages reveal: “Suffice it to say that it [the Christian religion] is built around the person of Jesus of Nazareth . . ., known to Urantia as the Christ, the anointed one ” (98:7.2). “It [Christianity] has glorified Jesus as the Christ, the Messianic anointed one from God . . .” (98:7.11). “. . . some believed him [Jesus] to be the Messiah; others said he could not be the Christ . . .” (162:6.4).

But the most damaging testimony against *The UB*’s contention that Jesus was not the Messiah comes from the Messiah Himself. Jesus plainly made the case that it was He who the Scriptures pointed to as the fulfillment of the messianic prophecies, saying, “**“These are the Scriptures that testify about me”**” (John 5:39; NIV). He also told His disciples: “**“All things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets, and the Psalms concerning Me”**” (Luke 24:44).

How is it possible, then, that all the apostles got the wrong message as *The UB* seems to imply? We see from the above passages that the blame is placed at the foot of the apostles for their overzealousness. But in another portion of *The UB*, the authors place the burden of misgiving squarely on the shoulders of Jesus himself. As if it were not enough to put thoughts into Jesus’ head that he was not the Messiah, the *UB* authors also stoop to portraying Jesus as though he had covertly perpetrated a false pretense regarding his identity:

“His followers were disposed to regard him as the expected Messiah. Knowing that he could never fulfill their Messianic expectations, he endeavored to effect such a modification of their concept of the Messiah as would enable him partially to meet their expectations. But he now recognized that such a plan could hardly be carried through successfully. He therefore elected boldly to disclose the third plan—openly to announce his divinity, acknowledge the truthfulness of Peter’s confession, and directly proclaim to the twelve that he was a Son of God. . . . He had decided to refrain from further efforts to convince them that he was not the Messiah. He now proposed boldly to reveal to them what he *is*, and then to ignore their determination to persist in regarding him as the Messiah.” (157:5.2,3; emphasis original)

In other words, Jesus of *The UB* “goes along” with his followers’ misconception for the sake of promoting his “real” reason for being! This seed of deception grows as his mission progresses ever onward toward his crucifixion. Just prior to his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the celestial prognosticators provide us with this commentary:

“Heretofore he had always endeavored to suppress all public acclaim of him as the Messiah, but it was different now; he was nearing the end of his career in the flesh, his death had been decreed by the Sanhedrin, and no harm could come from allowing his disciples to give free expression to their feelings, just as might occur if he elected to make a formal and public entry into the city.” (172:3.2)

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Later in the telling of the entry into Jerusalem, Jesus of *The UB* takes advantage of a messianic prophecy, despite his earlier determination not to claim the title:

“Having decided upon making a public entrance into Jerusalem, the Master was confronted with the necessity of choosing a proper method of executing such a resolve. Jesus thought over all of the many more or less contradictory so-called Messianic prophecies, but there seemed to be only one which was at all appropriate for him to follow. . . . This Scripture was found in Zechariah, and it said: ‘Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem. Behold, your king comes to you. He is just and he brings salvation. He comes as the lowly one, riding upon an ass, upon a colt, the foal of an ass.’” (172:3.4, citing Zechariah 9:9-10)

Paper 172 goes on to describe how Jesus made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, much the same way as the event is portrayed in the Gospel accounts (Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:28-40; John 12:12-19). But just as the authors are busily attempting to strip this pivotal event of its messianic underpinnings, they have also stumbled into a rather embarrassing case of irony. This very event, the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, is one of those that Matthew cites as having taken place “that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet” (Matthew 21:4), which are the very passages that the *UB* authors derided as having been falsely attributed to Jesus! We read from an earlier passage regarding the Gospel of Matthew:

“The author of this record constantly seeks to show in Jesus’ life that much which he did was that ‘it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet.’ Matthew’s Gospel portrays Jesus as a son of David, picturing him as showing great respect for the law and the prophets.” (121:8.4)

If Matthew was supposedly being “overzealous” in his writing style and was incorrect in his equating Jesus with Messiah as Paper 121 claims, how is it that the Jesus of *The UB* would take the liberty in Paper 172 of committing a public act that he full well knew would be viewed by many as the fulfillment of a messianic prophecy? It seems a bit unfair to blame Matthew for the “misgiving” if Jesus of *The UB* was in fact the propagator of such a deception. Furthermore, the *UB* rendition of this event portrays Jesus of *The UB* as a charlatan, a character flaw we would not expect to see from one claiming deity.

Because *The UB* stipulates elsewhere that Jesus was *not* a descendant of David (see below), the implication is clear that the author of Matthew was zealously attempting to portray Jesus as the Messiah, which *The UB* flatly denies. The *UB* authors would not be the first to take this tact. Enlightenment-era critics like Thomas Paine argued that the New Testament writers misused Old Testament prophecy and applied it to Jesus illicitly. Skeptics continue to use Paine’s arguments to this day. As an example, critics charge that Matthew misuses Hosea 11:1 (“When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt”) by claiming this passage was fulfilled by Jesus when his family returned from Egypt (Matthew 2:15). But research into ancient Jewish methods of exegesis shows that the New Testament writers did not use the Old Testament any differently than their contemporaries.<sup>3</sup> Matthew’s exegesis of Hosea is an example of what is referred to as *midrash*, a Jewish technique of interpretation in which phrases in the Old Testament were isolated from their context and applied to a new situation. Jesus was understood as fulfilling Hosea 11:1 because He re-enacted the theme of a return from Egypt.

In light of all these nuances, *The UB* falls under the judgment of 1John 2:22:

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“Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son.”

### Son of David

In step with the denial of Jesus’ fulfillment of the Messianic prophecies, *The UB* claims that Jesus was not literally a descendant of David, nor was he the “son of David,” as stated in the Bible. Several *UB* passages allude to this denial:

“David and Solomon were not in the direct line of Joseph’s ancestry, neither did Joseph’s lineage go directly back to Adam.” (122:1.1)

“Joseph was not of the line of King David.” (122:4.3)

“Jesus himself onetime publicly denied any connection with the royal house of David. . . . [T]he many genealogies of both Joseph and Mary . . . were constructed subsequent to Michael’s [Jesus’] career on earth. . . . [O]n the whole they are not genuine and may not be depended upon as factual.” (122:4.4)

“Was he or was he not of the house of David? His mother averred he was; his father had ruled that he was not. He decided he was not.” (126:3.10)

The Old Testament prediction that Jesus would be literally descended from David (2Samuel 7:12-16; Isaiah 11:1; Jeremiah 23:5), was fulfilled as stated in the genealogies of Christ (Matthew 1:1,6; Luke 3:31). The genealogy of Jesus is affirmed in the New Testament in other ways as well (Matthew 9:27; 15:22; 21:9; Mark 10:47; Luke 1:32,69; Acts 13:22-23; Romans 1:3; 15:12; 2Timothy 2:8; Revelation 5:5; 22:16).

*The UB*’s attempt to dismiss Matthew’s genealogy is disingenuous, since the Jews were known to carefully maintain their genealogies. *The UB* says that Joseph’s paternal ancestor from six generations previous was adopted as an orphan by a man called Zadoc. However, there is no biblical support for such an occurrence. But even if this adoption was truly part of Jesus’ ancestry, it would do no harm to the prophecy having been fulfilled. *The UB* states that Zadoc was “a direct descendant of David” (122:4.3), which supposedly explains why Joseph and Mary went to Bethlehem to be registered for the Roman census, thereby being accounted as hailing from the “house of David.” It is common knowledge that the account of Jesus’ lineage given in Matthew begins with Joseph, his adopted father. Although Joseph is not Jesus’ biological father according to the Gospel accounts, Joseph’s ancestry established a legally binding Davidic lineage for Jesus according to Jewish law. That some other ancestor of Joseph’s was adopted into the Davidic family tree would likewise establish the same ancestral lineage.

*The UB* even goes so far as to claim that “Jesus himself onetime publicly denied any connection with the royal house of David” (122:4.4). For this alibi to stick requires corroboration by Jesus, which *The UB* amazingly provides:

## A BIBLICAL EVALUATION OF *THE UB*

“Jesus said: ‘My little children, how long shall I bear with you! Have I not made it plain to you that my kingdom is not of this world? I have told you many times that I have not come to sit on David’s throne . . . .’ (138:7.1)

And no doubt, this “corroboration” will settle the matter for some. Of course, no Gospel parallel exists for this *UB* passage, which means that either this passage is an invention, or all the previously discussed Gospel passages providing corroborative claims of Jesus’ Davidic lineage were made up by the Gospel authors. It is plain to see which position is more likely to be true.

### The Resurrection of Christ

*The UB* portrays a Jesus that did not rise physically from the tomb. Instead, he was “raised” in what is referred to as a “morontia” body, being composed neither of a physical body nor a spiritual entity, but supposedly somewhere between physical and spiritual:

“Let us forever clarify the concept of the resurrection of Jesus by making the following statements:

“1. His material or physical body was not a part of the resurrected personality. When Jesus came forth from the tomb, his body of flesh remained undisturbed in the sepulchre. He emerged from the burial tomb without moving the stones before the entrance and without disturbing the seals of Pilate.

“2. He did not emerge from the tomb as a spirit nor . . . in the likeness of mortal flesh . . . .

“3. He did come forth from this tomb of Joseph in the very likeness of the morontia personalities . . . .” (189:1.6-9)

“After the resurrected Jesus emerged from his burial tomb, the body of flesh in which he had lived and wrought on earth for almost thirty-six years was still lying there in the sepulchre niche, undisturbed and wrapped in the linen sheet, just as it had been laid to rest by Joseph and his associates on Friday afternoon.” (189:1.2)

“The Christian belief in the resurrection of Jesus has been based on the fact of the ‘empty tomb.’ It was indeed a *fact* that the tomb was empty, but this is not the *truth* of the resurrection. The tomb was truly empty when the first believers arrived, and this fact, associated with that of the undoubted resurrection of the Master, led to the formulation of a belief which was not true: the teaching that the material and mortal body of Jesus was raised from the grave.” (189:2.6; emphasis original)

The physical resurrection of Jesus Christ is a cornerstone of the Christian faith. The Bible states that “if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile: you are still in your sins” (1Corinthians 15:17). *The UB*’s claim that Christ is “risen” is not the same as being resurrected in the same body of flesh and bones that Jesus existed in prior to His death. This claim of a “morontia” resurrection can be refuted both logically and biblically.

## PART IV

Logically, that which *dies* must be that which is *raised* again. Since it was Christ's *body* that died, it must be the very same *body* that was raised back to life. The Bible affirms this logical evaluation (Isaiah 26:19; Matthew 27:52; Acts 9:40). In addition, early Judaism believed in a physical resurrection, as the Old Testament teaches a resurrection of the flesh (Job 14:14; 19:26-27; Psalm 49:15; 71:20; Hosea 13:14). According to Peter, David foresaw that Jesus' body would not see decay (Acts 2:30-31; cf. Psalm 16:10). The Pharisees taught a physical resurrection (Acts 23:6-8), and Jesus Himself never corrected this belief, but rather affirmed it (John 5:25; 6:40; 11:25).

Jesus also made it clear that His body would be returned to physical life: **“Destroy this temple,”** He said, **“and in three days I will raise it up”** (John 2:19). The disciples had realized later that the “temple” He had spoken of was His body (John 2:21).<sup>4</sup> Jesus told the disciples that His resurrected body was made of **“flesh and bones as you see I have”** (Luke 24:39). The resurrected Jesus pointed to the crucifixion wounds on His body (John 20:27); ate food (Luke 24:41-43); and was physically recognized and touched by humans (Matthew 28:9; Luke 24:39; John 20:17,27).<sup>5</sup>

As it turns out, the *UB* authors make it clear that their resurrected Jesus had no wounds in his hands or feet:

“When the Master had so spoken, he looked down into the face of Thomas and said, ‘And you, Thomas, who said you would not believe unless you could see me and put your finger in the nail marks of my hands, have now beheld me and heard my words; and though you see no nail marks on my hands, . . . what will you say to your brethren? . . . Thomas, I bid you be not faithless but believing . . .’” (191:5.4; cf. John 20:27)

Of course, the marks on Jesus' hands, feet, and side would affirm the physical nature of His resurrection. On the other hand, the “resurrection” of the Jesus of *The UB* is no resurrection at all, but merely a “metamorphosis” of sorts, or a “reincarnation,” if you will. The Gospels attest that Jesus' body that arose and appeared to the disciples and other witnesses was the same physical body that was crucified. The wounds prove that Jesus was not an apparition or a reincarnation into a different body. Such evidences of Jesus' bodily resurrection were bound to be dismissed by *The UB*'s rendition thereof.

### What's All the Fuss?

Why do the *UB* authors expend so much effort attempting to distance Jesus from the Old Testament messianic prophecies? Are they really the altruistic visitors from on high as they claim and are merely trying to set the record straight for the benefit of our enlightenment, or could there be another, more ulterior motive? The establishment of the fulfillment of these prophecies by Jesus is one of the very cornerstones of the Christian faith. The significance of such a body of evidence through predictive prophecy is that it leads one to the undeniable conclusion that there is a divine Intellect behind the Old and New Testaments, whose singular purpose is to reveal His plan for salvation to mankind. That all of these predictions were foretold and fulfilled with complete accuracy establishes the fact that God has intervened in human history, authenticates the absolute deity of Jesus, and demonstrates the divine inspiration of the Bible. If the connection between Old and New Testaments can be severed by denying that these prophecies were fulfilled through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, then we are left with just another holy book that was conceived by idealistic but misled, perhaps even deceitful, humans.

## A BIBLICAL EVALUATION OF *THE UB*

*The UB* contends that the apostles had contrived the establishment of Jesus as Messiah. Indeed, confessions of Jesus fulfilling messianic prophecy are made by Peter (Acts 3:18; 10:43; 1Peter 2:5,6), Paul (Acts 13:29; 17:2,3; 1Corinthians 15:3,4; Romans 1:2), John (John 12:13-14; 15:23-25; 1John 2:22), and Matthew (Matthew 1:22,23; 4:12-16; 8:16-17). Not only do the apostles declare Jesus to be the Messiah, we have abundant utterances by Jesus Himself declaring His messiahship (Matthew 5:17; 11:10; 13:14; 21:42; 26:56; Mark 13:26; Luke 4:20,21; 22:37; 24:44; John 5:39, 40, 46, 47; 15:25). The celestials provide no evidence in support of their position to the contrary, other than their own word. On the other hand, the dozens of Old Testament prophecies created a fingerprint that only the true Messiah could fit, which gave Israel and the world a means by which to rule out impostors and validate the credentials of the authentic Messiah, should He ever show up. Against astronomical odds, of all the people who have lived during the thousands of years following the penning of these prophecies, only Jesus matches this prophetic fingerprint perfectly. To dismiss this evidence is to bet against the overwhelming odds in its favor.

### ENDNOTES

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1. *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, 3439.
2. The phrase "in the manger," which is found here only in the 1955 first printing of *The UB*, was unceremoniously deleted in the second printing (1967), among several other errors that were discovered by astute readers subsequent to the first printing. It appears the reason for this particular deletion is that it contradicted section 122:8, which states that the Chaldean priests had not visited baby Jesus while in the manger, but three weeks later. By that time, Joseph, Mary, and baby Jesus had moved into the inn at Bethlehem. The Urantia Foundation has yet to disclose whether said omission was implemented by mandate of the celestial authors, or whether they purged the offending words of their own volition.
3. See Richard Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999).
4. In yet another ironic twist, *The UB* contradicts itself by retaining this passage relatively intact: "And when the Master heard this, he said, 'Only one sign shall be given you.' And then, pointing to his own body, he continued, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' But they did not understand him, and as they dispersed, they talked among themselves, saying, 'Almost fifty years has this temple been in building, and yet he says he will destroy it and raise it up in three days.' Even his own apostles did not comprehend the significance of this utterance, but subsequently, after his resurrection, they recalled what he had said." (173:5.4; cf. John 2:18-22)
5. Norman L. Geisler, *In Defense of the Resurrection* (Clayton, CA: Witness, 1993), pp. 122-129.