

Is Christ God?

A study of the Scriptures and the writings of Ellen White

By Terry Hill

Written to the glory of God the Father and His Son

“And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.”

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Zechariah 13:6 John 3:16

*Please note: Unless otherwise stated, all scripture quoted in this study is from the KJV

First published 15th May 2018
Last edited 15th May 2018

© Terry Hill UK 2018

Email: terry_sda@blueyonder.co.uk

Website: <http://theprophetstillspeaks.co.uk>

The Guide Book

“Brethren, cling to your Bible as it reads, and stop your criticism in regard to its validity, and obey the Word, and not one of you will be lost. The ingenuity of men has been exercised for ages to measure the Word of God by their finite minds and limited comprehension. If the Lord, the author of the living Oracles, would throw back the curtain and reveal His wisdom and His glory before them, they would shrink into nothingness and exclaim as did Isaiah, “I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.” (*Ellen G. White, Ms 16 1888, ‘The Guide Book’*)

Index

The purpose of this study.....	Page 3
The Sonship of Christ.....	Page 3
Exclusive reporting.....	Page 8
Begotten of God.....	Page 10
Monogenes.....	Page 11
Monogenes linguistically.....	Page 13
Monogenes and the begotten faith of early Christianity.....	Page 22
Monogenes (and genes) – more historical evidence.....	Page 29
Christ in the First chapter of Hebrews.....	Page 31
Brought forth of God (God from God).....	Page 41
Our God is returning.....	Page 50
More thoughts on John 1:1.....	Page 54
Other verses to consider.....	Page 55
Thoughts and observations from the spirit of prophecy.....	Page 63
Additional statements from the spirit of prophecy.....	Page 91

The purpose of this study

Is Christ God or is He someone other than God – and if He is God, then seeing that the Father is also God, in what sense is He God? Is He the same God as the Father or are they two different Gods? These are questions that people ask therefore they need to be addressed. I hope this study, put together especially with Seventh-day Adventists in mind, will help provide some of the answers. God bless you as you read it.

The Sonship of Christ

The Bible very clearly says that Christ is God. The opening words of John's Gospel tell us

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.” John 1:1-3

That “the Word” is Christ is beyond question. As John went on to say

“And the Word was made 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 1:14

Whatever else we may make of John's opening words, we are told in no uncertain terms that Christ is God. The question is though, how is it possible for Christ to *be* God, yet at the same time be *with* God, the latter of whom most would readily identify as the Father? John himself provides the answer. Near the end of his Gospel he explains

“And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.” John 20:30-31

Here we are told the purpose of John's Gospel. It is to show that “Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God”. The “signs” referred to here are some of the acts and the words of Christ that John, inspired by the Holy Spirit, selected to show that this is true. John's Gospel therefore is a divine theology. This is why it is so unlike the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. These latter accounts of the life of Christ, often referred to as the synoptic Gospels, had been written around 30 or 40 years previous to John writing his Gospel.

John's Gospel is amongst the last of the revelations that the church, through the Bible writers, would receive from God. Within it we find the most complete revelation of God to humanity. Many scholars estimate it to have been written near the end of the first century (c. AD 96). This was at a time when the church, although still in its infancy, was already under threat from false teachings. This

was particularly regarding the identity and the nature of Christ. These erroneous teachings came from within the church and from without. John therefore would have been very careful when selecting the words he would write. This is why his Gospel, particularly with respect to Christ's personal identity, should be regarded as highly significant. It appears that John wrote his Gospel with the sole purpose of refuting these false teachings. The introduction of such teachings into the early church was something that the apostle Paul had warned would happen (Acts 20:27-30).

One source of these false teachings was a man named Cerinthus. The early church father Irenaeus (c. AD 130-202), in his work *Adversus haereses (Against Heresies)*, wrote about the things Cerinthus taught (see particularly Book 1 chapter 26). From Irenaeus we learn that Cerinthus was contemporary with John, also that he was John's 'arch-enemy'. Irenaeus also relates that Cerinthus taught that Jesus was born of Joseph and Mary (not a virgin birth), also that the divine Christ had entered into the human Jesus at His baptism and had departed from Him at the crucifixion. Cerinthus is also said to have taught that the universe had not been created by the supreme Deity but had been brought into existence by a certain power (a demiurge) that did not know the true God. Unfortunately, no writings of Cerinthus have been preserved. This has led to some taking the opportunity to challenge the report of Irenaeus but because no hard evidence has been produced to prove him wrong, there is no real reason to doubt what he wrote. Cerinthus is also spoken of extensively in *The Panarion*. This is a work, by the 4th century writer Epiphanius of Salamis, also written against heresies.

Another source of these false teachings was a group known as the Docetae (the illusionists). They were part of a larger group known as the Gnostics.

The Gnostics regarded themselves as the learned ones (the intellectuals). They claimed to have a secret (mystical) knowledge beyond the simplicity of the Scriptures. Rather than a simple faith in the Word of God, they embraced the idea of salvation through knowledge. Gnosticism was not a sect or a group. More than anything else it was intellectual philosophy. It was a serious threat to Christianity. It is still the same today. There is always the danger of rationalism taking the place of a simple faith in the things that God, through His Word, has made known to us.

The Docetae reasoned that divinity would not mingle with sinful humanity, so according to their reasoning, the body of Jesus was a mere phantasm (not real). Both Cerinthus and the Docetae concluded therefore that the divine Son of God had not really become flesh: also that a divine person had not suffered or died at Calvary.

Satan had failed to defeat Christ. He could not undo what Christ, through His life and death on earth, had accomplished, so he attempted to pervert it. This he purposed to do through these and other false teachers. Since then he has continued to pursue his objective.

It can now be seen why John began his Gospel by saying that the Word was God (1:1); that from the beginning the Word had been with God (1:2); that the Word had created all things (1:3); that the Word had become flesh (1:14). It can also be seen why John wrote that the divine Son of God was the One who knew God and had declared Him (1:18). It is hardly surprising that almost one half of John's Gospel is taken up with the events of the Passion Week - which culminated of course with the death of Christ at Calvary (John 12:1-19:42).

It is also said that the first two of John's little letters (1 and 2 John) were written to combat these false teachings. Certainly there is a striking resemblance between the prologue of John's Gospel (John 1:1-18) and these letters. In his letters, John emphasised that Christ had come "in the flesh". The importance John places on this can be seen in these words

"And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world." 1 John 4:3

"For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist." 2 John 1:7

John is the only Bible writer who uses the word "antichrist". We can see from the above how he makes the application (see also 1 John 2:18 and 4:3). He also wrote (regarding antichrist)

"Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son." 1 John 2:22

From the above we can see very clearly the problem that John was addressing. It was the same problem as he was addressing at the opening of his Gospel (see John 1:1, 14)

John also emphasised that as Christians "we know" (see 1 John 2:3, 2:10, 3:2, 3:14, 3:19, 3:24). This was an experiential knowledge This was in contrast to the philosophical knowledge of the Gnostics. This is why John could say

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;" 1 John 1:1

This is very similar to the opening of his Gospel (John 1:1). Notice that John says "our hands" have "handled" the Word. John was identifying himself with all the others who had actually been with Christ during His time on earth. These had been the eyewitnesses to Christ's life, death and resurrection..

It had been 65 years or so since Jesus had returned to His Father in Heaven (Acts 1:11). John therefore, when writing his Gospel, was no longer the young man he was when he first met Jesus (Matthew 4:18-22, Luke 5:1-2). He is now in

his mid to late 80's (perhaps older). Prior to writing his Gospel he had been exiled to the Isle of Patmos. It was here, during the cruel reign of the Roman Emperor Domitian (AD 81-96), that he received the vision of the Revelation (Revelation 1:1, 9). From the early Christian writers we learn that after his exile he resided at Ephesus. Some believe that previous to his exile he had pastored the churches of Asia Minor from Ephesus. Even in his old age, God had a work for John to do. This should encourage the older ones amongst us.

These "signs" that John gave were such as; Jesus turning the water into wine (chapter 2), the night discussion between Christ and Nicodemus (chapter 3), also the talk that Jesus had with the woman at the well. This was when He told her that He had the water of life, also that He was the promised Messiah (chapter 4). These signs also included the healing of the nobleman's son (chapter 4) and the healing of the impotent man on the Sabbath (chapter 5). The latter was when Jesus said (after being accused of working on the Sabbath), "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John 5:17). These signs also include the miracle of the fishes and the loaves when Jesus said He was the bread of life that had come down from Heaven (chapter 6); the giving of sight to the man born blind (chapter 9); also the raising of Lazarus from the dead (chapter 11). In addition to this, these signs include some of the discourses that Jesus had with His disciples, also the discussions He had with various groups of Jews such as the Scribes and the Pharisees. These discussions often concerned His personal identity.

Jesus repeatedly spoke of God as His Father (Matthew 7:21, 10:32, 18:10, Luke 10:22, John 5:17, 6:65, 8:19, 8:28, 16:10 etc). In John's Gospel alone there can be found over 30 instances where Jesus said "my Father". As we noted above, John devoted his entire Gospel to show that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God (20:31) - hence his continuous reporting of Christ calling God His Father. The personal testimony of God was that Christ was His Son (Matthew 3:17, 17:5).

There is overwhelming evidence in Scripture showing that Jesus claimed to be the Son of God. It would be far too much to comment upon in detail here. Suffice it to say that certain of the Jews regarded His claim as blasphemous (Mark 14:60-65 John 10:36). They said He was claiming to be God (John 5:18, 10:30-33). It was this claim of Sonship that He was challenged with at His trial (Matthew 26:63, Luke 22:70). The Jews said His claims made Him worthy of death (Mark 14:64, John 19:7, see also John 8:56-59). Jesus was mocked for claiming to be the Son of God (Matthew 27:40-43). It was on this point of Sonship with God that Satan challenged Christ in the wilderness (Matthew 4:3-6, Luke 4:3-9). Peter, when confessing Christ to be "the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16), was told by Jesus that it had not been "flesh and blood" that had revealed this to him but His Father in Heaven (Matthew 16:17). Jesus said very clearly that He was the Son of God (Matthew 16:16-17, John 3:16, 5:25-26, 9:35, 10:36, 11:4, 19:7). At His trial he claimed to be the Son of God (Matthew 26:64, Mark 14:62, Luke 22:70-71). It was this claim that brought about the sentence of death against Him (Mark 14:64, John 19:7).

The demons also addressed Jesus as the Son of God (Matthew 8:29, Mark 3:11, 5:7, Luke 4:41). The man in the tombs possessed of a devil also called Christ the Son of God (Luke 8:27-29). The Roman centurion said he believed that Christ was the Son of God (Mark 15:39). The disciples confessed Christ to be the Son of God (Matthew 14:33, 16:16, John 1:49, 11:27). Philip (the evangelist) explained to the Ethiopian eunuch that Christ was the Son of God (Acts 8:37). The first thing Paul taught after his 'blindness' was that Christ is the Son of God (Acts 9:20). Paul's continuing theme was that God had sent His Son into the world to die (Romans 1:4, 8:3, 32, 2 Corinthians 1:19, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 4:13 etc.). Not surprisingly, John's little letters, as does the book of Hebrews, constantly refer to Christ as the Son of God (1 John 3:8, 4:15, 5:5, 5:10, 5:12-13, 5:20, Hebrews 4:14, 6:6, 7:3, 10:29). That Christ is the Son of God was also the testimony of John the Baptist (John 1:32-34) – and so the list goes on.

Some say that Christ is a son only because of the virgin birth at Bethlehem, but if this were true, then John, when writing his Gospel (to show that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God), made a serious mistake. This is because he did not even mention the birth of Jesus or the events of Bethlehem. The only thing in this respect he did say was that the Word was made flesh (John 1:14). This must be the briefest of references to Christ's incarnation that it is possible to make. If John had wanted to show that the only reason why Christ was called the Son of God was because of the virgin birth then surely he would have at least mentioned where the angel Gabriel visited Mary saying that the child she was going to bear would be called the Son of God (Luke 1:35). As it was he did not even mention it. The prime reason therefore for Christ being called the Son of God cannot be His birth at Bethlehem. There must be another reason.

The “signs” that John gave were signs of Christ's divinity. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit he was led of God to show that Christ was the *divine* Son of God. This can clearly be seen in his opening words:

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

In order to fulfil the purpose in writing his Gospel (that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God), the very first thing that the Holy Spirit led John to write was that Christ, in His pre-existence, “was God”. From the outset therefore, John was saying to his readers that there are two divine personages who are both rightly termed God (*Gr. Theos*). This was the opening thrust of his Gospel. John then proceeded to reinforce his opening words. He did this by saying that all things were made by the Word and without him was not any thing made that was made (John 1:3). Christ therefore, says John, is our Creator. This is the highest possible claim to divinity. Only divinity is not created.

These are amongst the opening thoughts that John sought to impress on the minds of those who would read his Gospel. First he shows that Christ is God (1:1). Secondly he shows that Christ was in the beginning with God (1:2). Thirdly he says that Christ is our Creator (1:3). These opening words are the very

foundation for everything else he would write.

It is said that John's Gospel is written in easy-to-understand Greek – also that he uses a comparatively small vocabulary of around 600 words. This having been said, its simplicity contains the most profound truths given to man. These truths, down through the centuries, have captivated the minds of the most able of the world's theologians and scholars yet at the same time they have been understood by children. Its profundity lies in its simplicity of thought.

Exclusive reporting

It is interesting that John reports many unforgettable events in the life of Jesus that no other Gospel writer reported. For example: It is only John who reports what must be the most memorable of all the miracles performed by Jesus. This was the raising of Lazarus to life after he had been dead for four days (John 11:1-45). No one else reports either that because of what Jesus had done, the chief priests wanted to kill Lazarus (12:9-11). It is only John who reports the first miracle performed by Jesus. This was turning the water into wine at a marriage in Cana of Galilee (2:1-12). Another miracle that only John reported was when Jesus gave sight to the man who had been born blind (9:1-41). In addition to this, no one else mentions Jesus healing the impotent man at the Pool of Bethesda (5:1-15) – and only John records that Jesus healed the nobleman's son (4:43-54). The story of Thomas is exclusive to John's Gospel (20:24-29) – and it is only John who reports John the Baptist declaring Jesus to be the Lamb of God (1:19-34)

There are also talks and discourses that no one else but John reports. These are such as the discussion that Jesus had with Nicodemus (3:1-21), the talk that Jesus had with the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:1-42), the Jews' rejection of Christ's claims to divinity (5:16-18, 10:30-33), also the sermons where Jesus said that He was the bread of life (6:25-7:1), the light of the world (8:12-30) and the good shepherd (10:1-21). No one but John reports the first cleansing of the temple. This was when Jesus said (referring to His death and resurrection), "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:13-22)

All these things point to the divinity of Christ. God though never inspired Matthew, Mark or Luke to report them. It is just as though He had said to these inspired writers, "In your Gospels do not include any of these things. Leave them for someone else to report".

If it had been left to me alone to report the life of Jesus I am sure that the raising of Lazarus, the restoration of sight to the man born blind, the turning the water into wine, would have been at the top of my list of things to tell. As it was, no one but John even mentions them. John does not report any of the parables told by Jesus. Everything he writes is with the intent of showing Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of God (John 20:31).

Strange as it may seem, the climax to John's Gospel is the ultimate confession of someone who initially doubted the resurrection of Jesus. This person is Thomas.

Thomas was not with the other disciples when Jesus appeared to them in the upper room on the day of the resurrection, so when they next met with him they naturally tried to convince him that they had seen the risen Jesus. Unfortunately, Thomas stated emphatically that unless he could see and feel the wound marks for himself he would not believe (20:19-25). Eight days after the first appearance to His disciples, Jesus again appeared to them in the upper room (20:26). This time Thomas was with them. This led this one-time doubter to confess (after Jesus had invited him to touch the wound marks in His hands and side):

“... My LORD and my God.” John 20:28

Perhaps the words of Thomas were not inspired, but it is very noticeable that John, who was inspired (writing under the influence of the Holy Spirit), used them as a climax to all that he had previously written. It is noticeable too that there was no rebuke from Jesus to Thomas for saying these words. What Jesus did say, which can only be interpreted as an acceptance of the confession that Thomas made, was:

“Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.” John 20:29

John began his Gospel with the confession that Christ is God (John 1:1). He brought it to a conclusion in exactly the same way. It is just as though he is saying to his readers: “After studying the evidence I have provided in my Gospel, what else can we do except to confess, as did Thomas, that Jesus is “My LORD and my God”. Note that at John 1:1 and 20:28, the word “God” is translated from the Greek word *theos*.

It was immediately after writing about this admission of Thomas that John wrote

“And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.” John 20:30-31

It appears therefore that John used the confession of Thomas, also the response of Jesus to the words of Thomas, as one of these signs. This certainly brought his Gospel to its climax.

Throughout his Gospel, John repeatedly makes reference to Christ as being the Son of God. He also cites Jesus as continually speaking of God as His Father. This is the golden thread that runs through his Gospel from beginning to end. The terminology *the Son of God* therefore is the equivalent of saying that Christ is God. The question remains though: How could Christ, in His pre-existence, be God, yet at the same time be *with* God? (John 1:1). Is He the same God as He was with (the Father) or is He a different God? The answer is found in Christ's relationship to God – meaning in His Sonship.

Begotten of God

For Christ to be the divine Son of God He must be begotten (brought forth) of God. If He is not begotten (brought forth) of God then He can neither be a true Son nor truly God. Everything depends upon His Sonship to God. If Christ is deprived of His true Sonship then He is deprived of His true Godship (Godhood). John wrote in the prologue to his Gospel

“And the Word was made 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 1:14

“No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” John 1:18

John later wrote (relating the conversation that Jesus had with Nicodemus)

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”
John 3:16

“He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” John 3:18

Amongst various scholars there is a consensus of opinion that the words found in the above two verses were not spoken by Jesus. This is because these scholars regard Christ's conversation with Nicodemus as ending at verse 15. Whilst I am not going to debate this issue here, it is true to say that whichever way this is viewed, it does not detract from the fact that the Holy Spirit inspired John to write these words. This means that even if they were only John's comments, they are as true as if Jesus Himself had spoken them. This author takes the view that Jesus did speak these words. John also wrote in one of his pastoral letters

“In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.” 1 John 4:9

On two occasions with His own voice, God confirmed Christ's Sonship to Himself. The first was at the baptism of Jesus. The second was at His transfiguration

“And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Matthew 3:17

“While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.” Matthew 17:5

From the above it can be seen that this Sonship was not because of Christ's human birth at Bethlehem but because of His pre-existent relationship with God. To put it another way: According to the Word of God, Christ had a pre-existent Sonship.

Monogenes

John describes Christ as “the only begotten of the Father” (John 1:14), “the only begotten Son” (John 1:18, 3:16), “the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:18) and God's “only begotten Son” (1 John 4:9). On each occasion the Greek word translated “only begotten” is μονογενής (*monogenes*). John is the only Bible writer who uses this word with respect to Jesus. He uses it each time to denote the unique relationship between God and Christ (a father/son relationship). Luke and Paul used it in exactly the same manner (a parent/child relationship) although not with respect to Christ (Luke 7:12, 8:42, 9:38 and Hebrews 11:17). The basic meaning of *monogenes* is the only one of a generated kind or type. Applied to a child it generally means a parent's only born son or daughter (of sole descent, without siblings).

Some maintain that *monogenes* (an adjective) does not contain the idea of begetting. They say it only means unique. This view though, particularly in the light of how this word was used by those whose mother tongue was Greek, appears to have very little foundation. I am thinking primarily of those who formulated the creeds of Nicaea and Constantinople etc. The Creed of Nicaea (AD 325) begins by saying

“We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible; And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten from the Father, only-begotten [*monogenes*], that is, from the substance of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father, through Whom all things came into being, things in heaven and things on earth,...” (*Creed of Nicaea AD 325*)

By those who formulated this creed, Christ is said to be the “only-begotten” (*monogenes*) of the Father. This is exactly the same as say the Scriptures. This is why the creed also says that Christ is “begotten from the Father”, also “begotten not made”. In his Gospel, John clearly says that Christ is the only-begotten (*monogenes*) of God. The Greeks knew exactly what was meant by *monogenes* (μονογενής). In this creed it is contrasted with being made or created. The word translated “begotten” in these two clauses is the participle γεννηθέντα. It means literally begotten or born. It is very difficult to believe that the people who formulated this creed did not understand their own language.

As recently as the 1980's, the English Language Liturgical Commission (ELLC) completed a translation of the Nicene Creed. This new translation is said to be truer to the original Greek than many other English translations. The whole purpose of the ELLC is to translate as accurately as possible the various creeds and prayers etc. Their recent translation of the Nicene Creed says

“We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made”. (*English Language Liturgical Commission, ‘The Nicene Creed’, ‘Praying Together’ page 9, 1988*)

It does appear that although the word *begotten* with reference to Christ was omitted from such as the Weymouth (1903) and Moffatt (1913) translations, the main thrust of doing this came in the late 1940’s/1950’s. This was with the publishing of the Revised Standard Version (RSV). John 3:16 is translated as

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16 RSV

In principle, the thought that God did give His only Son is still preserved, but the word *begotten*, as in the KJV, is not included. This began a stir amongst many theologians. One though, a well-known Baptist minister (and Professor of Theology) by the name of Dale Moody, gave it his full support. Since then, many other modern translations such as the English Standard Version, the New International Version and the Holman Christian Standard, have followed suit. Some translations, like the latter two translations, have “one and only Son”. Interestingly, the Complete Jewish Bible renders John 3:16 as “only and unique Son” whilst Green’s Literal Translation, first published in 1985, has “only begotten Son”. The latter translation, for its Greek of the New Testament, used the Textus Receptus – as did the translators of the KJV.

Why though, if John simply wanted to say *one* or *one and only*, did he use *monogenes*? I ask this because the Greek word *monos* means *one* or *one and only* (alone). He must therefore have had a specific reason for using *monogenes* (*mono* + *genes*).

Some say that *monogenes* means unique, but this would not necessarily convey the idea that a child is the only begotten. This is because the child could have 5 brothers – all of whom have dark brown hair. He though (the *monogenes* child), if he had fair hair, would be unique. He would not be though the only-begotten. We shall return our thoughts to *monogenes* later.

The lack of the word *begotten* at John 3:16 is not confined to modern versions. William Tyndale’s translation (1525) has

“For God so loveth the worlde yt he hath geven his only sonne that none that beleve in him shuld perisshe: but shuld have everlastinge lyfe.” John 3:16 Tyndale 1525

Strangely though, in 3 of the 4 other places where John, with respect to Christ, uses *monogenes*, Tyndale did use *begotten*. This was at John 1:14, 1:18 and 1 John 4:9. The remaining verse, John 3:18 (like 3:16) has “the only sonne of God”.

No one knows why Tyndale omitted the word *begotten* at both John 3:16 and 3:18. In his notes he offers no explanation. What he does say though is the following (in 1530)

“The new testament is those everlasting promises which are made us in Christ the Lord thorowout all the scripture. And that testament is built on faith and not on works. For it is not said of that testament he that worketh shall live: but he that believeth shall live, as thou readest John iii. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that none which believe in him should perish but have everlasting life.” (*William Tyndale, Prologues to the Scriptures, A prologue in to the Second Book of Moses called Exodus, 1530*)

Here Tyndale clearly says that John 3:16 refers to Christ as “only begotten son”.

John Wycliffe, 135 years earlier in his translation, did have *begotten* at John 3:16 (in 14th century English)

“For God louede so the world, that he yaf his `oon bigetun sone, that ech man that bileueth in him perische not, but haue euerlastynge lijf.” John 3:16 Wycliffe 1395

In all the other places where John uses *monogenes* to describe Christ (John 1:14, 1:18, 3:18 and 1 John 4:9), Wycliffe’s translation has *begotten*. In many modern translations, all of these verses have been affected by the removal of *begotten*.

Monogenes linguistically

According to Strong’s concordance, the word *monogenes* is a compound of two words. These are *monos* and *ginomai*. The word *monos* means *sole* or *only* (one/single/alone) whilst *ginomai* means *to cause to be* or *to become*. Its basic meaning (Gr.– gen) is to produce or generate. It is a form of primary verb (an action word). It is used over 260 times in the New Testament. This is where it is often translated “made”, “become”, “come” (as in come to pass), and “became” etc. In John’s Gospel alone there are 48 occurrences.

In modern times, particularly since the publication of the RSV (late 1940’s/50’s), various scholars have taken the view that the suffix *-genes* (of *mono-genes*) is not derived from *gennao* (meaning beget) but from *-genos* (meaning kind or type). They reason therefore that *monogēnes* should not be rendered *only begotten* but *the only one of its kind or type*. This was the view of Dale Moody who was mentioned earlier (see *Journal of Biblical Literature*, December 1953, Vol. 72 No 4 pages 213-219).

Whilst one may argue for the validity of this view, it must be remembered that each time *monogenes* is used in Scripture it is always with reference to a son or daughter. In such cases therefore it would be impossible to divorce the idea of begetting from *monogenes*. This is because in order to exist, a child would need

to have been begotten (born). In other words, when speaking of a child (whether son or daughter), the idea of begetting is intrinsically built into *monogenes*. This is regardless of which stem of *genes* is considered to be the valid one. Look at it this way: If it is said that David is the only son of Mr and Mrs Smith, it would automatically suggest that David had been born (begotten). It would not be sensible to reason otherwise.

In an article I came across on the Internet, its author, Charles Lee Irons, makes this observation

“But what about the etymological argument that the –genēs portion of monogenēs comes from *genos* (“kind”) rather than *gennao* (“beget”)? This argument collapses once it is recognized that both *genos* and *gennao* derive from a common Indo-European root, *ǵenh* (“beget, arise”).[4] This root produces a fair number of Greek words having to do with biological concepts of begetting, birth, and offspring. In fact, the word *genos* itself sometimes means “descendant” (Rev. 22:16). True, it can also mean “kind” in a scientific or classification sense where literal biological descent is not in view (e.g., “different kinds of languages” [1 Cor 14:10]). But the scientific or classification usage is a metaphorical extension of the literal biological sense, since the abstract concept of “kind” is modeled on the embodied biological experience of the similarities shared by offspring descended from a common parent.” (*Charles Lee Irons, Let’s go back to ‘only-begotten’, https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/lets-go-back-to-only-begotten/, 23rd November 2016*)

Some months ago I came across a website called ‘Ask a Greek’. Its proprietor, Mr. Harry Foundalis Ph. D, offers to answer questions regarding the Greek language. Those who are interested will find it here

<http://www.foundalis.com/lan/grkask.htm>

I took this opportunity to ask Mr. Foundalis the meaning of *monogenes*. After all, I reasoned, he is Greek, and by the look of his website, a person very well versed in linguistics. After a series of emails in which he explained that *monogenes* definitely conveys the idea of *only-begotten/only-born etc*, he replied to a question I had asked concerning the relationship of the words *ginomai* (as mentioned above) and *monogenes*. Here is what he wrote

“Some linguistic information regarding the Greek word “monogenes” (μονογενής) follows:

“Monogenes” consists of two parts:

- the prefix “mono-”
- and the suffix “-genes”

The meaning of the prefix “mono-” is: “single”, “alone”, “only”. This prefix is

found in English words such as: “monophonic” (of a single auditory source), “monochromatic” (of a single color), “monologue” (a soliloquy), “monopoly” (having exclusive control of a market) “monosyllabic” (of a single syllable), “monotheistic” (of belief in a single god/God), “monotonous” (of a single, unvarying tone, hence: boring), and many more, all ultimately of Greek origin.

The meaning of the suffix “-genes” is: “born”, “begotten”. This can be understood by the following information.

The suffix “-genes” (in Greek: “-γενής”) consists of two morphemic parts:

- the root “-gen-” (“-γεν-”)
- and the ending “-es” (“-ής”)

The role of the ending “-es” is to convert the word into an adjective in the masculine or feminine gender, nominative case, singular, and that is the grammatical role of the word “monogenes”.

The root “-gen-” comes from the aorist stem of the verb “ginomai” (that is its Koine Greek version; its Classic Greek version is: “gignomai”), meaning: “I become” and “I am born to”. For instance, the opening line of Xenophon’s “Anabasis” reads:

Δαρείου καὶ Παρυσάτιδος γίνονται παῖδες δύο,...

i.e.:

Two children are born to Darius and Parysatis,...

An explanation of what the aorist stem is follows.

Every Greek verb (not only in the ancient but even in the modern language) comes in two “flavors”: the present or progressive flavor, and the aorist or instantaneous flavor. Each of the two flavors is used in the formation of some tenses, in all their moods. The present flavor is used in the present, imperfect, and perfect tenses, whereas the aorist flavor is used in the past and future tenses.

For the verb “ginomai”, the present-flavor stem is “-gin-”, whereas the aorist-flavor stem is “-gen-”.

For example, for this verb, to form the 1st person singular, past tense (a tense properly called “2nd aorist” in this case, for this verb has no 1st aorist form) we need to add three constituents:

1. the “aorist augment” e- (ἐ: a mandatory prefix that signifies past in Greek, and is suspected to have existed in the Proto-Indo-European language),
2. the stem -gen- (-γεν-),
3. and the 2nd-aorist ending -omen (-όμην),

thus getting the form *egenomen* (ἐγενόμην: “I became”, or “I was born”). The aorist stem *-gen-* has passed, through Latin, into English words, all of which are associated with generation or birth, such as:

- generate, generation (as in creation), generator
- genesis (origin, the coming into being, birth)
- gene (the biological unit by which rebirth is achieved)
- genetic (“of genes”)
- genus (a group of entities born from a common source)
- general (derived from *gener-*, i.e., “something that creates”)
- progenitor (a direct ancestor)
- ... and many more.

Perhaps the most interesting observation to help us understand the meaning of the entire suffix “-genes” (“-γενής”) in “monogenes” is to see other Greek words where this suffix exists. Notice how, when added to the prefix, in each case and without a single exception, “-genes” results in the meaning of “born, begotten”. All of the following are adjectives, just like “monogenes”:

- *homogenes* (ὁμογενής): someone who was born together (“homo-”) with others: “of the same race or family”. Today, this word is used to mean those Greeks who were born outside of Greece (e.g., in the USA, Australia, Russia, or wherever else in the world) but belong to the Greek nation due to their Greek ancestry.
- *heterogenes* (ἑτερογενής): the opposite of *homogenes*: born of a different (“hetero-”) race or family.
- *eugenes* (εὐγενής): born of noble ancestry, hence: noble, an aristocrat. This is the root of the word “eugenics”, the study of hereditary improvement of the human race by controlled selective breeding.
- *endogenes* (ἐνδογενής): someone or something that has been generated from within (“endo-”) some greater whole; endogenous, inherent, intrinsic. A common use is in *endogenes aitia* = “intrinsic cause”.
- *engenes* (ἐγγενής): similar to *endogenes*, it means “intrinsic”. Again, we can talk of an *engenes aitia* = intrinsic cause
- *thnisiogenes* (θνησιγενής): someone or something destined to die (“thnisi-”) no sooner than he/she/it is born. A *thnisiogenes* child is one that is born but has such serious medical problems that the child cannot hope to avoid death. More often, this word is used

metaphorically, for, e.g., an agreement: a thnisiqenes symphonía (θνησιγενής συμφωνία) is an agreement destined to collapse soon after it is made.

- diogenes (διογενής): born/sprung from Zeus. The true root of the word “Zeus” is “Dio-” (e.g., in the genitive case: Dios = of Zeus; a cognate of Theos = God, and of Latin Deus). This adjective was used as a flattering title for kings and princes. This was the origin of the name “Diogenes” (Διογένης, stressed on the penult).
- protogenes (πρωτογενής): born originally, the initially born entity or cause.
- gegenes (γηγενής): born in the land (ge-, γῆ = gaea), a native of the land.

Adding to the above list, we could write:

- monogenes (μονογενής): born as a single son or daughter, lacking siblings.”

(Harry E. Foundalis, Ph.D., cognitive science and computer science, <http://www.foundalis.com/lan/grkask.htm>, 24th March 2018)

In an earlier email, again expressing that *monogenes* does carry the idea of *only begotten/only born* etc, Mr Foundalis wrote to me stressing how obvious it was to him (as a Greek person) that *genes* conveys the idea of *begotten/born* etc.

“That the suffix “-genes” means (meant, and still means) “born” is beyond any doubt, and to argue for it makes me feel like trying to explain I am not an elephant” (Email, Harry Foundalis to Terry Hill, 23rd March 2018)

In another email, Mr Foundalis did agree that the second constituent of genes is γένος (genus) meaning type or kind but in agreement with my reasoning (see above), he did make clear that when applied to a child it could only mean *born*. His reasoning was, as is mine: How can anyone be an only child without being born? Mr Foundalis also explained

“This brings me to the meaning of γένος in Greek. This word has two meanings: one is the notion of grammatical gender; but the other one, the more common one and the only relevant one in this discussion, is the *progeny*. Thus, in Modern Greek, το γένος μου (and in Ancient Greek: τὸ ἐμὸν γένος) means “my kin”, the people who have been born together with me, and with whom I share plenty of genes. Γένος in Greek is **not** the same as genus in English, no matter how similar the two words look, letter-for-letter. Genus means (copying from the American Heritage Dictionary): “A class, group, or kind with common attributes”. That’s **not** the Greek γένος,

and I think that's at the crux of the misunderstanding. A γένος (besides the grammatical gender) is not just a class/group/kind, but a set of people who share many genes. The notion of *birth* is inherent in γένος. Non-native speakers of Greek are probably missing this point." (*Ibid*, 14th April 2018)

To put this in a very small nutshell, the word γένος (that we in English usually regard as genus) means in Greek, *of near kinship (family)*. The idea of birth (being born/begotten) is inherent in γένος.

If *monogenes* does not include the idea of *begetting* but only carries the idea of one only (single/sole/unique) of a type or kind, then to what does the latter refer when speaking of a *monogenes* child (meaning if the child is said to be the only one of a kind or type)? In other words, what would this kind or type be? Would it be his humanity? His kindred? His race? His colour? If so, this would mean he was the only human being in existence: either that or the only one of his kindred or race, or colour in existence. This would necessitate all other humans, or all others of his kindred or race or colour, having gone into extinction (no other of this kind existing). This therefore cannot be a satisfactory understanding of *monogenes*.

Amongst present-day theologians there is ongoing conjecture over *monogenes*. Some emphasise the *unique* aspect of it (only) whilst some stress the *come to be* (begotten/brought forth/born) aspect. The conclusion as to what it was that John originally meant by his use of this word can only be decided upon by the weight of evidence – which as far as I am concerned is that Christ is uniquely brought forth of God (in manner which has never been revealed). He is therefore the only begotten of God. His Sonship therefore is unique.

In his Greek dictionary, Bill Mounce, the renowned Greek Scholar, describes *monogenes* as

“only-begotten, only-born, Lk. 7:12; 8:42; 9:38; Heb. 11:17; only-begotten in respect of peculiar generation, unique, Jn. 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 Jn. 4:9*
(www.billmounce.com/greek-dictionary/monogenes, Bill Mounce, *Greek Dictionary*)

If John had wanted to say *one and only* (unique), it is very strange as to why he should have used the word *monogenes*. The Greek have a word meaning *one or one and only*. It is *monos*. They also have a word for *son*. It is *huios*. Why therefore, if John had only wanted to say *only son* or *one and only son* did he not simply use *monos huios*? It would also have avoided all the confusion of *monogenes*. An even more appropriate word that John could have used (if he had wanted to say *only Son* or *one and only Son*) is *μόνοπαις* (*monopais*). This word actually means an *only child*. It is found in pre-New Testament literature. This would have suited the “only child” at Luke 9:38 perfectly but Luke used *monogenes*. To me the writer was emphasising that the child was the only one of the man's *genes* – meaning his only offspring. Notice too that the word *child* is a supplied word.

Mark refers to “one son” (see Mark 12:6) but he does not use *monogenes*. Instead he has *heis huios*. This is what John could have written if he had only wanted to say of Christ, *only Son* or *one and only Son*. By using *monogenes* though, the stress was on Christ being the only begotten *of* God (only begotten *of* that genes).

We also need to give consideration to John’s usage of *monos*. He used this word on a number of occasions (John 5:44, 6:15, 6:22, 8:9, 8:16, 8:29, 12:24, 16:32 [2], John 17:3). It is translated as *only* and *alone*. Two very relevant usages are

"How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek the glory that is from the one and only [monos] God? John 5:44 NASB

"This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only [monos] true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." John 17:3 NASB

This leads us to give consideration to something very important. Nowhere in Scripture is the word *monogenes* applied to God. For this there must be a very good reason. After all, He is referred to at Mark 12:32, Romans 3:30, 1 Corinthians 8:6, Ephesians 4:6, 1 Timothy 2:5 and James 2:19 as the “one God”. If *monogenes* conveys only the idea of one and only, why not use it with respect to God? As it is, it is never applied as such. This alone suggests it is meant to convey considerably more than *one* or *one and only*.

In the Bible, angels are called the sons of God (Job 38:7). Adam was also called the son of God (Luke 3:38). Those who are born again through God’s Spirit (those who experience conversion) are called sons of God (Romans 8:14-15). John needed to differentiate therefore between Christ and these other sons of God. This would be the reason why he used the word *monogenes*. Thus he said that Christ was the only begotten *of* God (John 1:14, 1:18, 3:16, 3:18, 1 John 4:9). This could not be said of any of the other sons of God. None of them were begotten in such a manner *of* God. Christ therefore, in this sense, is definitely unique.

Whilst *monos huios* or *heis huios* (or perhaps even *monopais*) would have conveyed the idea of *the only son* or *one and only son*, this would have failed to specifically convey that Christ was the only-begotten *of* the Father. In other words, it would have concealed Christ’s unique generation from God (“God from God”, “true God from true God” as says the creed of Nicaea). It would therefore have concealed Christ’s unique relationship (Sonship) to God. This idea therefore of *monos huios* or *heis huios*, which would be without the idea of generation from God (not begotten), could easily have led to the idea of two Gods, or, if the Holy Spirit was also included, a triad of Gods.

If Christ is not literally a son – and we know the Bible continually speaks of Him as a son – then how is He a son? If He is not truly a son then He must be a son metaphorically. This would mean we have two divine beings (the Father and the

Son), both of whom, in their own individual right, are God (neither begotten of the other), This would mean we have two Gods. This though is not Scriptural. John therefore chose a word (*monogenes*) that showed Christ's true relationship with God therefore avoiding this conclusion. Christ was, and still is, God's only begotten Son.

Those who promote the idea that *monogenes* only has reference to *kind* or *type* (without begetting) are faced with a very serious dilemma. This is because with respect to Christ it must be asked, what is this *kind* or *type*? It cannot be pertaining to Christ as a divine person. This is because the Father is also a divine person. Christ therefore, as far as His divinity is concerned, cannot be *one of a kind or type* (unique). This immediately brings us back to the realisation that *monogenes* must be with reference to Christ's relationship to the Father, which in turn brings us back to His Sonship. It is His Sonship therefore that must be *one of a kind or type*. This is because He is the *only* begotten (*monogenes*) of God.

There is something else to consider here. This is the Creed of Nicaea mentioned earlier. We noted it said

“We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible; And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten from the Father, only-begotten [*monogenes*], that is, from the substance of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father, through Whom all things came into being, things in heaven and things on earth,...” (*Creed of Nicaea AD 325*)

The entire point of this creed was to show that the Son was “of one substance with the Father”. This is why the creed says that Christ is begotten “from the substance of the Father”. What though if the word *monogenes* is only said to mean *one and only*? We would need to ask “one and only what”? As has already been concluded (see above), it could not mean divine person. This would automatically rule out the Father as being divine. It would certainly mean that He and the Father were of a different kind (type). This reasoning would have completely destroyed the very purpose of formulating this creed. Those who formulated it though knew that *monogenes* would not destroy it. They could not have thought therefore that this word meant *one and only*. It must be to do with the Son's generation from the Father, meaning His Sonship. He is the only begotten of the Father.

From the above we can readily see that at John 3:16, the word *monogenes* could not simply mean *only* or *one and only* (without the idea of begetting). This would violate the fact that its suffix is -genes. In other words, if John had wanted to say at John 3:16 (and other places) that Christ is *the only son* or *one and only Son*, he would only have needed to use *monos* (not mono + genes). It needs to be remembered too that he did write *monogenes huios* (son) – not just *monogenes*. He was obviously emphasising more than simply *one and only* Son. He was emphasising that the Son alone is begotten of the Father.

Common sense dictates that those whose mother tongue was Greek knew their own language. To reason otherwise is not intellectually sound. It can only be concluded therefore that the translators of the KJV had it right. *Monogenes* does mean only-begotten.

On the basis of Paul's usage of *monogenes* in Hebrews 11:17, some have objected to this conclusion. They say that Isaac was not the only begotten of Abraham because he had a number of sons. The verse in question says

“By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten [*monogenes*] son”
Hebrews 11:17

We need to remember here that those to whom Paul was writing were descendants of a people who had been the recipients and custodians of the Old Testament Scriptures. It was absolutely imperative therefore that in expressing himself to them he wrote in harmony with these writings. In Hebrews 11:17, the apostle was referring to when God had said to Abraham

“And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only *son* Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.” Genesis 22:1-2

“And he [God] said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only *son* from me.” Genesis 22:12

Notice in each of these verses that there is an occasion of the word “son” in italics. This is because it is a supplied word (supplied by the translators of the KJV). It is not in the original text. In these verses, God actually refers to Isaac as Abraham's “only” (Heb. *Yachiyd*).

Much could be said here concerning the fact that the word “only” is translated from the Hebrew word *Yachiyd* but space is limited. Suffice it to say that in the Scriptures, this word is translated ‘only *son*’ (Genesis 22:2, 22:16, Amos 8:10, Zechariah 12:10), ‘only’ (Judges 11:34), ‘darling’ (Psalm 22:20 and 35:17), ‘desolate’ (Psalm 25:16), ‘solitary’ (Psalm 60:6) and ‘only *beloved*’ (Proverbs 4:3). Note that the words in italics are again supplied words.

God had promised that Abraham and Sarah would have a son. This was even though Sarah was past childbearing age. In order to ‘help’ God, Abraham produced a son by Sarah's handmaiden Hagar. This son's name was Ishmael. Ishmael though was not the son promised by God. Isaac was the promised one. In calling Isaac “*thine only*” [*yachiyd*] therefore, God was emphasising this fact to Abraham. God was leaving Ishmael out of the question.

Isaac was a son by the promise of God. He was *caused to be* by God. God though did not promise that Ishmael should be born. He had been the result of human devising. Isaac on the other hand was special. His existence was a miracle. He was definitely *one of a generated (begotten) kind or type*. Paul therefore chose a Greek word that would suit this perfectly. It was *monogenes*.

Monogenes and the begotten faith of early Christianity

The begotten concept concerning Christ was not something new that was introduced at Nicaea. It was the ongoing faith of Christianity. This had been the same since the beginning. Over the years, in the research I have undertaken, I have not found any early church writer of note who has said that Christ was not begotten. In fact at the height of the dispute over Christ (that led to the Council of Nicaea being convened in AD 325) Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria, wrote in a letter to the Bishop of Constantinople (Alexander claimed, along with others, that Christ had 'always' been begotten of God – now orthodox trinitarianism)

“But let no one be led by the word ‘always’ to imagine that the Son is unbegotten, as is thought by some who have their intellects blinded: for to say that He was, that He has always been, and that before all ages, is not to say that He is unbegotten.” (*The ecclesiastical history of Theodoret, Book 1, Chapter 3, page 39 ‘The Epistle of Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria to Alexander, Bishop of Constantinople’*)

Needless to say, this begotten concept concerning Christ was, according to Alexander, indispensable to early Christian theology.

Whilst they cannot all be listed here in detail, I will quote some statements from various early Christian writers that confirm this conclusion. These are not quoted to determine a theology but to show what the early church believed. I will quote first from the writings of Ignatius (AD 35-108). He was Bishop of Antioch. He is said to have been a convert of John the Gospel writer. He would have known exactly what John believed. This is particularly regarding those things written in his Gospel. Ignatius may even have read the original.

Ignatius (also called Theophorus) was born very soon after the death and resurrection of Jesus. Some say that it was as early as AD 35 although others maintain it was a few years later. Whichever date is correct, Ignatius certainly lived during the time of the apostles. This would have been during the time of such as Peter, Paul, James and John etc. This is something that for quite understandable reasons is very important. He would have known from first-hand experience what the early Christians, particularly the apostles, believed and taught. Ignatius, because of his faith, was put to death in the Coliseum at Rome. On his journey to Rome, he wrote letters to the churches.

Unfortunately there are in existence longer and shorter versions of these letters. Some take the view that the shorter ones are the originals. They say the longer ones are corruptions that have had words added to them. On the other hand, the opposite could very well be true.

On his way to his death in Rome, Ignatius wrote to the Ephesians (this is the longer version)

“Ἰατρὸς δὲ ἡμῶν ἐστὶν ὁ μόνος ἀληθινὸς Θεὸς, ὁ ἀγέννητος καὶ ἀπρόσιτος, ὁ τῶν ὅλων κύριος. τοῦ δὲ μονογενοῦς πατὴρ καὶ γεννήτωρ· ἔχομεν ἰατρὸν καὶ τὸν Κύριον ἡμῶν Θεὸν Ἰησοῦν τὸν Χριστόν· τὸν πρὸ αἰῶνων υἱὸν μονογενῆ καὶ λόγον, ὕστερον δὲ καὶ ἄνθρωπον ἐκ Μαρίας τῆς παρθένου· ὁ λόγος γὰρ σὰρξ ἐγένετο” (*Cureton, William Tr., Corpus Ignatianum: a complete collection of the Ignatian epistles, genuine, interpolated and spurious, together with numerous extracts from them, as quoted by ecclesiastical writers down to the tenth century, in Syriac, Greek, and Latin, page 23, 1849*)

Translated this is:

“But our Physician is the only true God, the unbegotten and unapproachable, the Lord of all, the Father and Begetter of the only-begotten Son [*monogenes*]. We have also as a Physician the Lord our God, Jesus the Christ, the only-begotten [*monogenes*] Son and Word, before time began, but who afterwards became also man, of Mary the virgin.” (*Ignatius, Epistle to the Ephesians, longer version, chapter VII*)

This is a longer version but it does not make any difference to the fact that when it was written (said to be the 2nd or 4th century), the word *monogenes* was understood as “only-begotten”. We know this because by way of contrast, the Father is said to be the “unbegotten”, also the “Begetter” (of the only-begotten Son). These two aspects therefore cannot be divorced from each other. Notice Ignatius says that the “only-begotten Son” is “the Lord our God” whilst the Father is “the only true God”. This was the early faith of Christians. Notice too, very importantly, that all of this was said to have been “before time began”.

Even if this longer version is considered false, the shorter version says

“There is one Physician who is possessed both of flesh and spirit; both made and not made; God existing in flesh; true life in death; both of Mary and of God; first passible and then impassible, even Jesus Christ our Lord.” (*Ignatius, Letter to the Ephesians, chapter 7, shorter version, Roberts-Donaldson translation*)

Here again we see Christ as being described as “God existing in flesh”, also that Christ is “of Mary and of God”. Both can only mean born of or begotten of – hence we can see the reason for the longer version, even if it is a corruption, saying that Christ is “the only-begotten”.

This next letter is very interesting. This is because it is shorter version. Here again Christ is described as God’s “only-begotten Son”. This time though this phrase is not translating μονογενής (*monogenes*) but “τοῦ μόνου υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ”. Notice too here that Christ is called “the Son of the Father”.

“Ignatius, who is also called Theophorus, to the church which has obtained mercy, through the majesty of the Most High Father, and Jesus Christ, His only-begotten Son; the church which is beloved and enlightened by the will of Him that willeth all things which are according to the love of Jesus Christ our God, which also presides in the place of the region of the Romans, worthy of God, worthy of honour, worthy of the highest happiness, worthy of praise, worthy of obtaining her every desire, worthy of being deemed holy, and which presides over love, is named from Christ, and from the Father, which I also salute in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father:”
(Ignatius, The Epistle of Ignatius to the Romans, shorter version, translated by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson)

Whilst there may be serious doubts about which letters of Ignatius are true and which are false, the belief noted here (that Christ is truly the Son of God, also that He is God) is in complete harmony with the other early Christian writers. In this respect they believed exactly the same

Justin Martyr (AD 100-165) was another early Christian apologist. Like Ignatius, he too was martyred for his faith. He was beheaded in Rome. In his *Dialogue with Trypho* he wrote the following (please note that these paragraphs are not contiguous)

“For I have already proved that He was the only-begotten [*monogenes*] of the Father of all things, being begotten in a peculiar manner Word and Power by Him, and having afterwards become man through the Virgin, as we have learned from the memoirs.” *(Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho, Chapter 25)*

“For if you had understood what has been written by the prophets, you would not have denied that He was God, Son of the only, unbegotten, unutterable God.” *(Ibid, chapter 126, ‘The various names of Christ’)*

“And it is written in the book of Wisdom: ‘If I should tell you daily events, I would be mindful to enumerate them from the beginning. The Lord created me the beginning of His ways for His works. From everlasting He established me in the beginning, before He formed the earth, and before He made the depths, and before the springs of waters came forth, before the mountains were settled; He begets me before all the hills.’ When I repeated these words, I added: “You perceive, my hearers, if you bestow attention, that the Scripture has declared that this Offspring was begotten by the Father before all things created; and that which is begotten is numerically distinct from that which begets, any one will admit.” *(Ibid chapter 129, ‘That is confirmed from other passages of Scripture)*

We can see from the above that Justin Martyr believed that the wisdom of Proverbs 8:22-31 was referring to Christ being brought forth (begotten) from God. Notice here he describes Christ as the “Offspring” “Begotten by the Father”. He also makes clear that, “that which is begotten is numerically distinct from that

which begets". That much he says, "any one will admit". Notice too that like Ignatius he says therefore that Christ is "God". He describes Christ as *monogenes* (only-begotten)

In chapter 61 he again quoted Proverbs 8:22-31. Notice very importantly the first sentence

"The Word of Wisdom, who is Himself this God begotten of the Father of all things, and Word, and Wisdom, and Power, and the Glory of the Begetter, will bear evidence to me, when He speaks by Solomon the following: 'If I shall declare to you what happens daily, I shall call to mind events from everlasting, and review them. The Lord made me the beginning of His ways for His works. From everlasting He established me in the beginning, before He had made the earth, and before He had made the deeps, before the springs of the waters had issued forth, before the mountains had been established. Before all the hills He begets me. God made the country, and the desert, and the highest inhabited places under the sky. When He made ready the heavens, I was along with Him, and when He set up His throne on the winds: when He made the high clouds strong, and the springs of the deep safe, when He made the foundations of the earth, I was with Him arranging. I was that in which He rejoiced; daily and at all times I delighted in His countenance, because He delighted in the finishing of the habitable world, and delighted in the sons of men.'" (*Ibid chapter 61*)

Here he refers to Christ not only as the wisdom of God brought forth but also as "Himself this God begotten of the Father".

Tertullian (c AD 155 - 224), another person writing against the heretics, wrote in his work *Against Praxeas* (please note that these paragraphs are not contiguous)

"We, however, as we indeed always have done and more especially since we have been better instructed by the Paraclete [the Holy Spirit], who leads men indeed into all truth), believe that there is one only God, but under the following dispensation, or *oikonomia*, as it is called, that this one only God has also a Son, His Word, who proceeded from Himself, by whom all things were made, and without whom nothing was made. (*Tertullian against Praxeas, chapter 2*)

"Listen therefore to Wisdom herself, constituted in the character of a Second Person: "At the first the Lord created me as the beginning of His ways, with a view to His own works, before He made the earth, before the mountains were settled; moreover, before all the hills did He beget me;" that is to say, He created and generated me in His own intelligence." (*Ibid chapter six*)

"Thus does He make Him equal to Him: for by proceeding from Himself He became His first-begotten Son, because begotten before all things; and His only-begotten also, because alone begotten of God, in a way peculiar to Himself, from the womb of His own heart -- even as the Father Himself

testifies: "My heart," says He, "has emitted my most excellent Word. "The father took pleasure evermore in Him, who equally rejoiced with a reciprocal gladness in the Father's presence: "You art my Son, today have I begotten You;" even before the morning star did I beget You. The Son likewise acknowledges the Father, speaking in His own person, under the name of Wisdom: "The Lord formed Me as the beginning of His ways, with a view to His own works; before all the hills did He beget Me." (*Ibid, chapter seven*)

Tertullian is quoting from Psalm 2:7 (Hebrews 1:5) and Proverbs 8:22-31. We can see that he also believed that the bringing forth of Wisdom in Proverbs 8:22-31 is the same as the begetting of the Son in Psalm 2:7 and Hebrews 1:5. Notice that Tertullian interprets the wording of Proverbs 8:22 as "The Lord formed Me as the beginning of His ways" whereas it says in the KJV "The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way". Notice above that Tertullian said that God "by proceeding from Himself He became His first-begotten Son".

We shall return our thoughts to Proverbs 8:22-31 later. Interestingly, Tertullian also said

"That this rule of faith has come down to us from the beginning of the gospel, even before any of the older heretics, much more before Praxeas, a pretender of yesterday, will be apparent both from the lateness of date which marks all heresies, and also from the absolutely novel character of our new-fangled Praxeas". (*Ibid*)

This faith that Tertullian professed here he said was "from the beginning of the gospel". This therefore was not a new faith but the original faith of Christianity. Tertullian is saying that anything opposed to it is heretical. This original faith is the begotten (Sonship) faith. This is the faith that the creeds were later (4th century onwards) to summarise by saying that Christ was God from God, true God from true God. According to Tertullian therefore, a begotten Christ had always been the faith of Christianity.

Much more could be quoted from the early Christian writers saying exactly the same (that Christ was begotten of God) but space is limited. To see more of these statements you can go to *the Begotten Series* at the following link (see especially chapters 2 and 3)

<http://theprophetstillspeaks.co.uk/Begotten/BegottenSeries.pdf>

Before moving on I would like to return your thoughts to the debate concerning Christ that led to the council of Nicaea being convened. In a letter that the Bishop of Alexandria wrote to the Bishop of Constantinople we find this comment

"We have learnt that the Son is immutable and unchangeable, all-sufficient and perfect, like the Father, lacking only His "unbegotten." He is the exact and precisely similar image of His Father. For it is clear that the image fully contains everything by which the greater likeness exists, as the Lord taught

us when He said, ' My Father is greater than I.' And in accordance with this we believe that the Son always existed of the Father; for he is the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His Father's Person.'" (The ecclesiastical history of Theodoret, Book 1, Chapter 3, page 39 'The Epistle of Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria to Alexander, Bishop of Constantinople')

We can see that Alexander is quoting from Hebrews 1:3. He is saying that the Son is not unbegotten like the Father but was begotten in "the express image of His Father's person". This word "person" (Gr. *hupostasis*) is extremely important. It means under-girding – meaning that which makes something what it is (its very substance). We shall return our thoughts to this later. Notice Alexander says that the only difference between the Father and the Son is that the Son is "lacking only His [the Father's] "unbegotten". In other words, the Son of God is begotten (of the Father). This differentiates Him from the Father.

Alexander believed that Christ had been continually (always) begotten of the Father. This was at the very heart of the controversy concerning Christ that led to the Council of Nicaea being formed. This debate, put in a very small nutshell is as follows: Was Christ begotten at a point in eternity or had He always been begotten. Either way, the belief of early Christianity, in keeping with Scripture, was that Christ was begotten of God therefore He is truly the Son of God. This led Alexander to write

"But let no one be led by the word 'always' to imagine that the Son is unbegotten, as is thought by some who have their intellects blinded: for to say that He was, that He has always been, and that before all ages, is not to say that He is unbegotten." (*Ibid*)

Another rendering of this is found in the book *The Two republics* written by A. T. Jones. He cites Alexander as saying (remember that Alexander's letter had been originally written in Greek)

"But let no one be led from this to the supposition that the Son is unbegotten, as is believed by some who are deficient in intellectual power: for to say that he was, that he has always been, and that he existed before all ages, is not to say that he is unbegotten." (A. T. Jones, *The Two Republics*, pages 159-160)

From the above, we can see how strongly the early Christians believed that Christ was begotten of God. Those who said that Christ was not begotten were said to be "deficient in intellectual power": This indeed was the faith of early Christianity. It was in keeping with where Christ said

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
John 3:16

Returning our thoughts to the debate concerning *monogenes*: It is true that if

someone is an only child then this alone would automatically make him or her unique but this does not detract from the necessity of the child having to be begotten in the first place.

I previously mentioned the 4th century writer Epiphanius of Salamis and his massive work against heresies called *The Panarion*. He wrote (addressing himself to the belief of the heretics)

“28.4 <Their> distortion of the exegesis is obvious. Where John proclaims one God almighty, and one Only-begotten [*monogenes*], Christ Jesus, through whom he says all things were made, <saying> that he is Son of God, he is only-begotten [*monogenes*], he is maker of all, he is the true light that enlightens every man, is creator of the world, is the one who came unto his own, and that he himself became flesh and dwelt among us— (5) these people, speciously perverting the exegesis, hold that there is another Only-Begotten [*monogenes*] in the series of emanations whom they also call Beginning, and that there was another Savior and another Word, the son of Only-begotten [*monogenes*], and another Christ, emitted for the rectification of the Pleroma.” (*Frank Williams, The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis, Book 1 (sects 1-46), section 2, 31.28.4-5*)

Four times, in this one section, Epiphanius of Salamis refers to Christ as *monogenes* (only-begotten). Throughout his work (*The Panarion*), he does the same over and over again.

Irenaeus (c. AD 130-202) who is considered to have been born in Smyrna, served the church for a long time in France. He lived during a time when persecution and heresy existed side by side. In fact because of the martyrdom of Pothinus (the first Bishop of Lyon), he became the second Bishop of Lyon. No writings of Irenaeus exist in Greek. They only exist in Latin copies. What he wrote though is very interesting. Remember we are here talking in terms of the beliefs of 2nd century Christianity.

“If any one, therefore, says to us, “How then was the Son produced by the Father?” we reply to him, that no man understands that production, or generation, or calling, or revelation, or by whatever name one may describe His generation, which is in fact altogether indescribable. Neither Valentinus, nor Marcion, nor Saturninus, nor Basilides, nor angels, nor archangels, nor principalities, nor powers [possess this knowledge], but the Father only who begat, and the Son who was begotten. Since therefore His generation is unspeakable, those who strive to set forth generations and productions cannot be in their right mind, inasmuch as they undertake to describe things which are indescribable.” (*Irenaeus, Against Heresies, Book 2, chapter 28 Translated by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson*)

This is very true. There is nothing in Scripture that would even suggest how Christ was begotten. It just says He was begotten. In book 3 Irenaeus wrote

“For that according to John relates His original, effectual, and glorious generation from the Father, thus declaring, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Also, “all things were made by Him, and without Him was nothing made.”... Matthew, again, relates His generation as a man, saying, “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham;” and also, “The birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise.” (*Ibid, Book 3, chapter 11*)

As noted previously, John is the only Gospel writer who says that Christ is begotten of God. We can see here that Irenaeus describes the Father as the One who generates (who begets) and the Son as the One who is begotten.

Very interestingly, Jack Finegan in his book “Encountering New Testament Manuscripts: A Working Introduction to Textual Criticism” cites Irenaeus as quoting John 1:18 as

“Deum enim, inquit, nemo vidit unquam, nisi unigenitus Filius Dei, qui est in sinu Patris, ipse enarravit.” (*Jack Finegan, Encountering New Testament Manuscripts: A Working Introduction to Textual Criticism”, page 168*)

In the KJV this reads

“No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” John 1:18

Why I say this is interesting is because many (such as Dale Moody mentioned above) claim today that the words “only-begotten” only found their way into the KJV because of a mistranslation by Jerome in his Latin Vulgate (end of the 4th century). It is said he translated *monogenes* as *unigenitus* (meaning only begotten) instead of *unicas* (meaning one of a kind, only, sole, single etc.) but here we see whoever copied Irenaeus (into Latin) also translating it as “*unigenitus*” (only-begotten). This is highly suggestive that Jerome did not translate *monogenes* incorrectly. This is no more than the KJV translators translated it incorrectly.

Monogenes (and genes) – more historical evidence

There is also other external evidence as to how those who were Greek understood the word *monogenes*. This can be seen from the following extracts from Greek pre-New Testament writings.

“There should be an only [*monogenes*] son to feed his father's house, for so wealth will increase in the home; but if you leave a second son you should die old. Yet Zeus can easily give great wealth to a greater number.” (*Hesiod. Works and Days, line 375. The Homeric Hymns and Homerica with an English Translation by Hugh G. Evelyn-White. Works and Days. Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd. 1914*)

It would be nonsensical here to say that *monogenes* means one of a kind or type

with respect to this son's humanity or kindred. This is because it would be saying that the son was (a) the only human remaining "to feed his father's house" or (b) he was the only one of his kindred to do so. What sense would that make? Absolutely none. He would have to be the only human in existence or the only one of his kindred in existence – which would make complete nonsense of the text.

Here are a few more statements.

"The son of Cronos did her no wrong nor took anything away of all that was her portion among the former Titan gods: but she holds, as the division was at the first from the beginning, privilege both in earth, and in heaven, and in sea. Also, because she is an only [monogenes] child, the goddess receives not less honor, but much more still, for Zeus honors her." (*Ibid, Theogony, Line 427*)

"Not the least proof I have of this is the fact that Leonidas publicly dismissed the seer who attended the expedition, for fear that he might die with them. This was Megistias the Acarnanian, said to be descended from Melampus, the one who told from the sacrifices what was going to happen to them. He was dismissed but did not leave; instead he sent away his only [monogenes] son who was also with the army." (*Herodotus, Histories, Book 7, line 221, with an English translation by A. D. Godley. Cambridge. Harvard University Press. 1920*)

"Wherefore, in order that this Creature might resemble the all perfect Living Creature in respect of its uniqueness, for this reason its Maker made neither two Universes nor an infinite number, but there is and will continue to be this one generated [monogenes] Heaven, unique of its kind." (*Plato. Plato in Twelve Volumes, Vol. 9 translated by W.R.M. Lamb. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd. 1925.*)

Notice that the final quote refers to a "one generated [monogenes] Heaven", meaning that it is "unique of its kind".

Here is another interesting quote. It does not include *monogenes* but it says a great deal about how *genes* was understood (of one blood)

"You sons of Leda and Zeus, I will let go my former quarrel over your sister; and mine I shall no longer try to kill. Let Helen go home, if the gods think it right. Know that you are born from the same blood [homogenes] as a sister who is the best and also most self-controlled; may you fare well, for the sake of Helen's most noble mind, a quality not to be found in many women." (*Euripides. The Complete Greek Drama, edited by Whitney J. Oates and Eugene O'Neill, Jr. in two volumes. 2. Helen, translated by E. P. Coleridge. New York. Random House. 1938*)

This study on monogenes would be incomplete if the use of this word in the Septuagint was not included.

The Septuagint is a 3rd/2nd century BC Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures. It appears that it owes its existence to Ptolemy ii (285-246 BC) who desired it for his library in Alexandria. As far as is known, this was the first translation into Greek. This would have been the Scriptures that were in general use when Christ was on earth. Many Old Testament passages quoted in the New Testament are taken from the Septuagint. The following are some examples of where *monogenes* was used when translating it. This is from the Sir Lancelot Charles Lee Brenton (1806-1872) translation.

“And Jephthae came to Masepha to his house; and behold, his daughter came forth to meet him with timbrels and dances; and she was his only child [*monogenes*], he had not another son or daughter” Judges 11:34

“Deliver my soul from the sword; my only-begotten one [*monogenes*] from the power of the dog.” Psalms 22:20

“Look upon me, and have mercy upon me; for I am an only child [*monogenes*] and poor” Psalm 25:16

“O Lord, when wilt thou look upon me? Deliver my soul from their mischief, mine only-begotten one [*monogenes*] from the lions.” Psalm 35:17

“O daughter of my people, gird thyself with sackcloth: sprinkle thyself with ashes; make for thyself pitiable lamentation, as the mourning for a beloved [*monogenes*] son: for misery will come suddenly upon you.” Jeremiah 6:26

In the finality, to a great extent, an author’s intent of the use of *monogenes* must be determined by the context in which it is written. This would apply to how any word is understood. This is because words, depending upon the context in which they are written, can change in meaning.

We have seen from this and previous sections that prior to, also after, the New Testament was written, the meaning of *monogenes*, as applied to a son or daughter, would mean only begotten (only born etc.). There is no reason to even suggest therefore that John, when applying this word to Christ, intended his readers to regard it any differently. Certainly they would not have read it any differently. It is also how his readers, during the centuries following the writing of his Gospel, would have understood *monogenes*. We have seen this from the writings of the early church fathers.

Fortunately, the question of whether or not Christ is truly the Son of God does not totally depend upon the understanding of a single Greek word. There is so much more evidence in Scripture that reveals Christ’s Sonship to God. We shall see this as we proceed with this study.

Christ in the first chapter of Hebrews

The writer of the Book of Hebrews, whom I believe was Paul (so I will refer to him as such throughout this study), opened his epistle with these words

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.”
Hebrews 1:1-3

These three verses are comparable with the first three verses of that which John would write 30 or so years later in his Gospel. John said that the Word was with God and was God; also that by the Word were all things made that were made (John 1:1-3). Paul says that the Son is “the brightness” of God’s “glory” and the “express image” [Gr. χαρακτήρ] of God’s “person”, also that through Him the worlds were made. If both authors were inspired they must be saying the same thing. In other words, Christ being the “express image” of God’s person must be the equivalent of saying He is God.

Strong’s concordance transliterates the Greek word χαρακτήρ as *charakter*. It appears that originally this was an engraving tool or a marker (engraver) but later came to be known as the impression or engraving itself. It is from where we derive the word *character*. This is the only place in the Bible where this word is used. This is why there can be no comparison of usage.

As do many scholars, Strong describes this word as meaning an exact impression or precise reproduction of persons or things that are original. An impress in wax is not that which did the impressing. A stamp on a coin is not the die that causes the impress. A footprint in the sand is not the foot that made the print. Each is distinct from the other, but there is the closest of relationships between the original and the impression. Without the original there would not be an image. It is also interesting to note that such an impression is always an integral part of the very substance of which it is impressed (like an impression in wax). It is cut (formed) from the substance but remains a part of it.

The *Abingdon Bible Commentary* of 1929 (compiled by some 66 professors of biblical exegesis, biblical languages, theology, Christian doctrine and church history etc.) has the following to say with reference to the words “express image” (KJV)

“The word translated ‘very image’ means, literally, the stamp cut by a die, and so the impress made upon a seal; thus the phrase signifies that the essence of the divine nature was stamped on the Person of Christ. He was the ‘impress of God’s essence.’ (Professor H. T. Andrews, D.D., *The Abingdon Bible Commentary*, 1929)

So what does it mean to say that Christ is the “express image” (exact impress) of God’s *person*?

In this Scripture (Hebrews 1:3), the Greek word translated “person” is *hupostasis*.

It is a compound of two other Greek words. These words are *hupo* meaning literally *under* (Matthew 5:15, Luke 13:34, Acts 2:5 and Romans 16:20 etc.) and *histemi* meaning to be *stood, stand, standing, set or be established* (see Matthew 2:9, 6:5, 18:16, Mark 9:36, John 1:26, and Acts 24:21). We can see therefore that *hupostasis* means the *foundation or under-girding* (sub-structure or substance) of cause of being, or, to put it another way, the *essential structure* of what makes something what it is. Christ therefore is the “[express image](#)” (stamp/impress) of the substance/foundation/under-girding of God. In other words, what God is so is the Son. In this respect they are one and the same. One though, the Son, is the image.

Paul noticeably avoided using words that could make it appear he was saying it was only in outward appearance that Christ was the “[express image](#)” of God’s person. One such word is *prosopon*, meaning the countenance or appearance (i.e. that which is visibly seen, the visage). We can see therefore that the word *hupostasis* does not refer to exterior appearance. This can be seen even more clearly when we see how the same author uses this word in Hebrews 3:14

“[For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence \[*hupostasis*\] stedfast unto the end](#)” Hebrews 3:14

This “[confidence](#)” is the substance of our hope (it is that of which our hope is made, the foundation or under-girding). As Paul explains as he uses this Greek word for the third time in this epistle

“[Now faith is the substance \[*hupostasis*\] of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.](#)” Hebrews 11:1

The substance/confidence (*hupostasis*) is the ‘stuff’ of which our hopes are made. It is our faith, the foundation or under-girding of our hopes. Take note of how William Tyndale translated Hebrews 1:3. His was a 16th century translation into English

“[Which sonne beynge the brightnes of his glory and very ymage of his substance bearinge vp all thinges with the worde of his power hath in his awne person poured oure synnes and is sitten on the right honde of the maiestie an hye](#)” Hebrews 1:3 Tyndale’s translation 1525

Tyndale’s translation says that the Son is the “[very ymage](#)” of God’s “[substance](#)”. This is in contrast to the formulators of the KJV who translated *hupostasis* as “[person](#)”. The earlier translation is much clearer to us today than the KJV. It shows exactly what Paul meant by his use of *hupostasis*. It is referring to God’s very (inner) being (what God is). It is that which makes God God. It is His *sub-structure*. Unfortunately today, when we say *person*, we simply think of this as the entirety of a human being when in fact it can mean the actual self or personality (inner nature/being) of a human being.

Other translations also make it very clear. They translate this phrase as

“...the exact representation of His nature ...” New American Standard Bible

“...the very stamp of his nature...” Revised Standard Version

“...the very image of his substance...” American Standard Version

“...an exact representation of his very being...” Rotherham Bible

“...the flawless expression of the nature of God...” J. B. Phillips translation

“...stamped with God's own character...” Moffatt translation

“...the exact representation of His being...” Weymouth translation

By saying that Christ was the express image of God's inner person (nature/being), Paul was saying everything that God is (in His nature) so is the Son (in His nature). This expression therefore (express image of God's person) means that Christ is a visible representation of the inner person/character/being of the invisible God. This is why Jesus told Philip (when Philip asked Him to reveal the Father)

“...Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? John 14:9

The apostle Paul continued his introductory remarks

“Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? Hebrews 1:4-5

Angels have a superior nature to that of humanity (Hebrews 2:7, 2:9, 2:16, 2 Peter 2:11). Paul is saying here that Christ's nature, in His pre-existence, is far superior to that of the angels. This was not referring to Christ's human nature during the incarnation. That was fallen human nature (Romans 8:3, Hebrews 2:16). Christ's pre-existent nature is divine. His attributes are those of deity. This was His inheritance as a son. The attributes of the angels are not those of deity. Angels are created. They did not receive their nature as an inheritance.

The question posed here by Paul invites a negative response. God has never said to any of the angels “Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee” therefore no single angel has the title the Son of God. When reasoned through, it is not possible that God could have spoken these words to an angel. This is because the angels are not begotten but created. God created them through His Son (John 1:3, Colossians 1:16, Hebrews 1:2). The Son therefore was begotten *before* the angels were created. Christ is the *only* begotten of God. This is why He is an *only* son.

In Acts 13:33 we find the apostle Paul (the author of Hebrews) applying the words of Psalm 2:7 to the resurrection of Jesus but he could not have been doing this here in Hebrews. As we noted earlier, Christ was not called the Son of God simply because of His birth at Bethlehem so why say He became a Son simply because of the resurrection? This would be a form of adoptionism. Christ was the Son of God from eternity. This was the point that John was making with his Gospel. It seems therefore, although not explicitly stated, that the words of Psalm 2:7 were first spoken to Christ when He was begotten of God in eternity, also that they would have a secondary applications to the resurrection (Acts 13:33). This was when God brought forth the Son for a second time. This second time being from the grave.

There are a number of instances in the Bible where secondary applications are made of Old Testament Scriptures. Take for example Hosea 11:1

“When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.”
Hosea 11:1

This has a primary application to God bringing His people (the Hebrews) out of Egypt but Matthew, over 700 years after Hosea wrote the words, applies them to the child Jesus. Thus Matthew makes a secondary application of them

“When he [Joseph] arose, he took the young child [Jesus] and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.” Matthew 2:14-15

No one though, exactly as Hosea had originally written them, could have applied these words to the coming Messiah. This is because Hosea continued by saying that the Hebrews, after their deliverance from Egypt, went on to worship graven images. Matthew therefore, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, lifted a singular statement from its original context and applied it to Christ.

It is the same with Isaiah 7:14. As Christians we regard this text as a prophecy of the virgin birth but when Isaiah said to King Ahaz that “... the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” [which means ‘God with us’], the immediate application was to God promising to be with the king in battle against his enemies. Yet Matthew, some 700 years later, gives it a secondary application to the birth of Christ

“Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.”
Matthew 1:23

Only someone under the direct inspiration of God could make such secondary applications of a particular portion of Scripture. This in principle would explain what Paul did when he applied Psalm 2:7 to the resurrection.

Christ is begotten of God. Only God can come out from God. Christ therefore is God. This is His inheritance (Hebrews 1:2, 1:4). This is why He is called the Son of God. The angels did not come out from God. Christ created them. Christ is the Creator of this world. Nothing exists in the universe except that it was made through Him (John 1:3, Hebrews 1:2, Colossians 1:16-17). Angels therefore are external to God. Not so with Christ. He is the only begotten of God. This is why He is God's *only begotten* Son. He therefore would have been begotten (brought forth) in the "express image" of God's very being. The difference between the Father and the Son is that the Father is unbegotten whilst the Son is begotten. This is why Jesus said that the Father is the only true God (John 17:3). Christ recognised His Father as the source of His life (John 5:26). It is also why God and Christ (Father and Son) each possess a personal identity of their own. They are two distinct personalities.

The second sentence of Hebrews 1:5 ("I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son") is a citation from 2 Samuel 7:14. Primarily its application was to David's son Solomon but Paul gives it a messianic application. It would also apply to when Christ was begotten in eternity (the same as Psalms 2:7).

God's promise was that David's house and kingdom would be established forever (2 Samuel 7:12-13). This promise could not be fulfilled through humanity alone. For its ultimate fulfilment it would need someone not subject to death. This promise could only be fulfilled in Christ. In His humanity, Christ was of David's seed (see also Isaiah 11:1, Jeremiah 23:5-6 and Matthew 1:1-16, 15:22, Luke 23-38, Acts 2:20-30, Revelation 22:16) but in His pre-existence He was God (John 1:1). He will endure forever (Isaiah 9:6, Hebrews 1:8-12). The next verse in Hebrews says,

"And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him." Hebrews 1:6

Notice first of all that Christ is referred to as God's "firstbegotten". The Greek word translated "firstbegotten" is *prototokos*. It means *first born*. In other places such as Matthew 1:25, Luke 2:7, Romans 8:29, Colossians 1:15, 18, Hebrews 11:28 and 12:23 it is actually translated *firstborn* (KJV). In fact many translations of Hebrews 1:6, instead of *firstbegotten*, actually have *firstborn*. Here we see the "firstbegotten" (firstborn) of God and of Heaven being brought into the world.

This is referring to Christ in His incarnate state. The angels are commanded by God to worship Christ. He is no longer as He was previously in Heaven where they had worshipped Him as the divine Son of God. Now He had become human. He had become a part of His own creation. Prior to this they had never worshipped anyone but God. Certainly they had never previously worshipped a human being; neither had they worshipped one of their angelic companions. Angels are not to be worshipped (Revelation 19:10, 22:8-9).

It was the Father who brought Christ back from the dead into the inhabited world (Galatians 1:1). Only God's firstbegotten could redeem those who had become

captive to Adam's failure. Revelation 5:11-12 says (with reference to the risen Saviour)

“And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.” Revelation 5:11-12

This was the end result of the Father telling the angels to worship the Son. Christ had fulfilled His mission on earth. He was the only one found worthy to open the book and loose the seals (Revelation 5:1-10).

The incarnate Christ is the fulfilment of God's promises concerning the perpetuity (never ending) of David's seed. Note especially verses 26-29 of Psalm 89, also the reference to *firstborn*

“He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation. Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven.” Psalms 89:26-29

The ultimate fulfilment of this prophecy was only made possible through the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem. This was when the pre-existent Son of God was made flesh (John 1:14). Paul speaks of the fulfilment of this promise (Romans 1:3-5, 2 Timothy 2:8). It had also been prophesied that the Christ would come out of Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). King David was of Bethlehem. This was his family home (see 1 Samuel 16:1, Luke 2:4).

When the wise men from the East came asking “Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him” Herod called “all the chief priests and scribes of the people together” and “demanded of them where Christ should be born” (see Matthew 2:1-4). They replied saying

“... In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.” Matthew 2:5-6

The Jews therefore were well aware of these prophecies. Here they would have had in mind Micah 5:2. They also called the promised Messiah the ‘son of David’ (see Matthew 9:27, 12:23, 15:22, 20:30-31, 21:9 and 21:15).

Jesus sought to draw the attention of the Pharisees to this title (the son of David) as speaking of Himself, also to His divinity. A scribe came to Jesus asking Him

what is the “first” (greatest) of the commandments. Jesus replied with the words found in Deuteronomy 6:4-5 and Leviticus 19:18. The scribe agreed with Jesus. He said “thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he:”. The scribe also agreed that: “to love him [God] with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” Mark records “And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God” (see Mark 12:28-34). The scribe understood that the sacrifices in the temple worship were not a substitute for the inward piety of the life but as yet he had made no acknowledgement of Christ’s divinity. Thus Jesus said to him “Thou art not far from the kingdom of God”.

The Pharisees had gathered around Jesus. He asked them “... What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They replied “...The son of David” (Matthew 22:42) Jesus then asked a very pertinent question. It was also one that brought them to silence. He asked (quoting Psalm 110:1)

“...How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?” Matthew 22:43-45

In the New Testament, Psalm 110:1 is the most referred to of all Old Testament Scripture. Certainly Jesus regarded this Psalm as messianic. In verse 1, the Hebrew text reads *Yahweh* speaking to *adown*. There was no argument from the Pharisees that David was referring to the Lord (*adown*) as the Messiah so we can assume that this is what they must have believed. We can see this also from Peter’s sermon at Pentecost. Here he quotes Psalm 110:1 (in Acts 2:34)

“Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Acts 2:29-38

Interestingly, in the KJV (as quoted here in Acts 2:34), the first occurrence of *kurios* is in capital letters (LORD) whilst the second occurrence is “Lord”. There is no grammatical reason why this should be. It is more than likely that the first

occurrence is LORD because Psalm 110:1 (from where this is cited) says “*Yahweh* said unto *adown*”. It is generally accepted that here the Father is speaking to His Son. This (LORD) is also how it is translated at Mark 12:36, Luke 20:42 and Revelation 19:16.. Psalm 110 is also referred to at 1 Corinthians 15:25, Hebrews 1:13, 5:6, 7:17, 7:21 and 10:13.

The word *kurios* does not always refer to God. It has a number of meanings and applications. While in the NT it is mostly translated *Lord (lord)*, on other occasions it is translated, *Sir, owner(s), master(s)* and *idols*.

So referring back to the question that Jesus asked (“If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?”), the Pharisees were faced with a dilemma. This is because they believed that the promised Messiah would be of the seed of David (the son of David) so how, reasoned Jesus, could David, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, call him Lord? David, as the King of Israel, would not have had a human superior. This suggests him recognising this *adoni* not only as superior to himself but older than himself. Hence Jesus asked, “**how is he his son?**” In other words, how could someone older than David be his (David’s) son?

The Pharisees knew that the long-awaited Christ (the Messiah) would be from the days of eternity (Micah 5:2), also that He would abide forever (John 12:34). This is why they could not contemplate Him dying (John 12:34). Matthew then records that “... no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions” (Matthew 22:46). Christ’s pre-existence, also His divinity, was a continuing stumbling block to many of the Jews. This was especially to the scribes and the Pharisees (John 5:18, 8:58, 10:33).

John recorded (after quoting Jesus as saying “If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water”)

“Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet. Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? So there was a division among the people because of him. And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him” John 7:40-44

We have seen that the coming Messiah could not have been from human descent alone. When the angel Gabriel visited Mary to inform her that she was going to conceive, she was also told

“Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?”

And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. Luke 1:30-35

Jesus did earn the right to the throne of David. This He did through His righteous (perfect) life on earth, also through His vicarious death at Calvary (see also Isaiah 9:6-7). He became the last Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45, see Genesis 2:7, Romans 5:14).

Returning our thoughts to the Book of Hebrews, Paul went on to say

“And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.” Hebrews 1:7-8

Paul is now bringing the introductory words of his epistle towards a climax.

The above words are citations from Psalm 104:4 and Psalms 45:6-7. The writer is applying the latter to the Father speaking to His Son. The Father is referring to His Son as God. This is the highest acclamation that could possibly be made of the Son. It is the testimony of God Himself. God never said to any of the angels, “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever”. He only said it to His Son. This is the point that the writer of Hebrews is making (see 1:5 and 1:13). Christ is deity. The angels are not deity. The verses following say

“Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands:” Hebrews 1:9-10

Here we see God referring to Himself as His Son’s God (*theos*). Notice too that the Father calls His Son “Lord”. This means that God has called His Son both God (*theos*) and Lord (*kurios*). The Father also refers to His Son as the Creator. All things were made through Him (John 1:1, Hebrews 1:1-3, Colossians 1:13-17 etc.). In these verses in Hebrews, God (*theos*) is speaking to God (*theos*). This should remind us of Genesis 1:26 and 11:7.

As the apostle drew his opening remarks to a close he asks

“But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” Hebrews 1:13-14

Paul is quoting Psalm 110:1. We saw earlier how Jesus dealt with this when speaking with the Pharisees. Again Paul’s question invites a negative response. God never said to any of the angels “Sit on my right hand, until I make thine

enemies thy footstool...". This no more than He said to any of them "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee" (Hebrews 1:5) or "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever". God created the angels. Christ is begotten of God. Christ is God.

J. B. Phillips paraphrased this very well

"But does he ever say this of any of the angels: 'Sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool?' Surely the angels are no more than spirits in the service of God, commissioned to serve the heirs of God's salvation." Hebrews 1:13-14 J. B. Phillips

Christ came out from God (was brought forth of God) therefore the name He receives must be Jehovah. Again this is inheritance. Jehovah is our God and our salvation. As Isaiah wrote

"Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. And in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted. Sing unto the LORD; for he hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth. Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee." Isaiah 12:2-6

As we shall see later, it was Christ who was "the Holy One of Israel". It was He who was in the midst of the Jewish nation. It was he who led them out of Egypt into the Promised Land.

God is the Father of Christ. Christ is the Son of God. The Son is God's person (personality) shown. As the apostle Paul said, He is the "express image" of God's "person (substance)", also the "image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15). Christ therefore is (the invisible) God begotten (brought forth).

A person cannot be the same person as he is with. Each individual person has his or her own personal identity. This is why we know that the Father is not the Son; also that the Son is not the Father; yet in Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Colossians 2:9). In Christ we behold the Father (John 14:9-11).

Brought forth of God (God from God)

As we have already seen, the evidence of the New Testament clearly reveals Christ to be the divine Son of God. This evidence is overwhelming. In the Old Testament it says of Him (this was under the figure of wisdom)

"The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the

fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth: Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.” Proverbs 8:22-31

This is referring to an act of God that happened prior to the creation of anything in the universe. This act is said to be the “beginning” of God’s “way”. It is therefore a happening in eternity (in infinity). Only God existed at this point (before anything was created) therefore this bringing forth (verses 24 and 25) can only be of God. Everything else, meaning everything God created, is external to Him. Christ is not external to God. He was brought forth *of* God therefore He *is* God. We noted above how the early Christian writers applied these words to Christ. They spoke of these words as Christ being brought forth (begotten) *of* God.

In this text (Proverbs 8:22) the word “beginning” is translated from the Hebrew *re’shiyth*. It is the same word as used in Genesis 1:1

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” Genesis 1:1

It can also be translated as ‘first’ (Numbers 15:20) or ‘firstfruits’ (Proverbs 3:9) etc.

The “beginning” of Proverbs 8:22 must pre-date (antedate) the “beginning” of Genesis 1:1. This is because Solomon is referring to a point in eternity prior to anything having been created. For the same reason, the “beginning” of John 1:1 also predates (antedates) the “beginning” of Genesis 1:1 (see also Psalms 90:2, Micah 5:2).

Those who would like a more detailed understanding of Proverbs 8:22-31 may like to see section 8 of the *Begotten Series* here

<http://theprophetstillspeaks.co.uk/Begotten/BegottenSeries.pdf>

The apostle Paul describes Christ as “the wisdom of God” (1 Corinthians 1:24, see also 2:1-8). Solomon says wisdom was “brought forth” (Proverbs 8:24:25). Only God can be “brought forth” of God. Anything that is not “brought forth” of God is created (a part of creation). Christ was not created. He is begotten. This is why He is Son (Hebrews 1:2). This is also why the Father is God and the Son is God yet they each have a personal identity of their own. As we noted above, Christ is the express image of God’s person (Hebrews 1:3). This is because He is God from God. He is God’s person (personality) made visible. In Christ we behold God in the person of the Son. Here though is where we need to remember the words of Jesus contained in that beautiful prayer to His Father.

“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” John 17:3

Christ refers to His Father as “the only true God”. He did not say though that He, as God’s Son, was not God, neither did He say that only His Father is God or only His Father should be called God. He is simply referring to His Father as the great source of all. Christ is also saying of Himself that He, as a Son, is a distinct individual from His Father.

It was the same when the young man came to Jesus saying to Him “Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?” (Mark 10:17). Jesus replied

“...Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.”
Mark 10:18

Jesus was not denying His own divinity. It was just as though He was saying to this man “If you accept that I am good – and it is true that only God is good - then are you acknowledging me as whom I say I am – the Son of God? The Scriptures also tell us

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: Philippians 2:5-6

If Christ had been less than God or someone other than God, then He could not have considered Himself as equal with God. This equality is the result of His Sonship with God. Here again we see two divine personalities. One personality is “God” while the other is “Christ Jesus”. Here we are also told that Christ, in His pre-existence, was in the “form of God”. As well as in character, this would be in outward appearance. This is why God could say to Him, “Let us make man in our image, after *our* likeness” (Genesis 1:26). The Greek word translated “form” is *morphe*. The only other place it is used in the Bible is where Mark wrote that Jesus, on the road to Emmaus, “appeared in another form [*morphe*]” to two of His followers (Mark 16:12, see also Luke 24:16). William Tyndale translated this verse in Philippians as

“Which beyng in the shape of god and thought it not robbery to be equal with god.” Philippians 2:6 Tyndale’s translation 1525

God must have a “shape”. If He didn’t have a shape then there would have been no point in Jesus saying

“And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. John 5:37

Jesus identified Himself with the one true God. This is when He said to the Jews

“... Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.” John 8:58

The Jews knew exactly what Jesus was claiming. They knew He had identified Himself with the One who had spoken to Moses from the burning bush.

“And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, the LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.” Exodus 3:14-15

Christ was indeed the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He was the God of the Jews. He was their spiritual rock that was with them in the wilderness (1 Corinthians 10:1-4). He is Jehovah (Isaiah 12:2). Now though, in human flesh, He was standing before His people as their God. Unfortunately they failed to recognise Him as such. They would only have applied this appellation (the I AM) to God – and they certainly did not regard Jesus as such. This is why the Scriptures record that they took up stones to throw at Him (see John 8:59). It is also why John wrote in the prologue to His Gospel

“He came unto his own, and his own received him not.” John 1:11

It was Philip who said to Jesus “Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us”. Jesus could have replied saying “Sorry, I cannot do that Philip. No one can see the Father and live”. Instead He replied

“... Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.” John 14:9-10

In these words of Jesus there can be sensed an element of surprise. The disciples had confessed Him to be the Son of God (Matthew 14:33, 16:16, John 1:49). They also knew He claimed to be the Son of God (Matthew 16:16-17, John 5:18, John 9:35). They knew too that this was what the Scribes and Pharisees held against Him (John 5:18). They would even have known that this had been the testimony of God Himself (Matthew 3:17, 17:5). They still though, so it seems, had failed to recognise His true identity. It was just as though Jesus was saying to them, “Are you saying that even though I have been with you for over 3 years you still don’t know who I really am?” Christ then said

“Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works’ sake.” John 14:11

Christ’s words are again the reiteration of the great truth that He spoke to the Jews when He said

“I and my Father are one.” John 10:30

God has never explained the oneness of existence between Himself and His Son. It is a mystery known only to divinity. This is why we must never attempt to explain it. Even if God did provide an explanation, it would probably be beyond our comprehension to understand it. Can the finite comprehend the infinite? The Jews certainly realised though what Jesus was claiming. John recorded (this was after Jesus had said that He and His Father were one)

“Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.” John 10:31-33

There can be no mistaking as to what the Jews understood Jesus to be saying. It was that He was God (theos). To many of the Jews, particularly the Scribes and the Pharisees, this was “blasphemy”. If Christ had not been God then they would have been correct. The same reaction came when Jesus healed the impotent man on the Sabbath. John recorded (another of the signs to show that Christ was the Son of God)

“And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day. But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.” John 5:16-18

We need to remember that John wrote his Gospel with the intent of proving Christ to be the Son of God (John 20:31) – which terminology means that Christ is God (John 1:1). We can see therefore why the Holy Spirit led this Gospel writer to select these discussions that Jesus had with the Jews. They tell us so much. They tell us how the Jews understood Christ’s words. Jesus though had not made Himself God. His existence as a separate person from God was by the pleasure of the Father (Colossians 1:19).

The Jews called God their Father. They must have realised therefore that Jesus was not claiming this in the same sense as they were claiming it else they would not have condemned Him for it. They must have understood Him to be claiming God as His Father in a very literal sense. This is why they said He was making Himself equal with God. Jesus did not say they had misunderstood His words. In personality He was not the one true God (the Father) but He was manifesting God in the flesh. It is no wonder therefore that God led the prophet Isaiah to prophecy of the coming Messiah

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”
Isaiah 9:6

One notable time when Christ claimed the same prerogatives of God was when He said to the man with palsy

“... Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.” Luke 5:20

There was anger in the minds of some of those present

“And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?” Luke 5:21

If the Scribes and the Pharisees had realised the true identity of Jesus they would not have reasoned this way. As it was, they again regarded Him a blasphemer.

Wherever we go in Scripture we return to the thought that Christ spoke of Himself as both the Son of God and God. The two expressions are seemingly synonymous. This is in keeping with the very first words of John in his Gospel (John 1:1). John also made this observation

“No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” John 1:18

Respecting this verse there is a long-standing division of thought. This is because manuscripts are divided over the precise wording. Some have *monogenes theos* (only begotten God) while others have *monogenes huios* (only begotten son). The New American Standard Bible – which is said by some to be the most accurate of modern day translations (1971) – translates the verse this way

“No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.” John 1:18 NASB

Another modern version, the English Standard Version, translates this verse as

“No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.” John 1:18 ESV

The majority of the manuscripts that have *monogenes theos* (only begotten God) are those of the Alexandrian type. The trinity doctrine came out of Alexandria. Having said that, it is doubtful that a trinitarian would favour *monogenes theos*. This is because Christ could be made to look like another god (a begotten god) separate from God. In fact I find it very interesting that in his 4 discourses against the Arians, also in his *De Decretis* (Defense of the Nicene Definition), Athanasius, a leading supporter of what would eventually become trinitarian theology, repeatedly quoted John 1:18 as *only begotten son*. It appears that except for a few exceptions, all the non-Alexandrian type manuscripts have *monogenes huios* (only begotten son).

I also find it interesting that the New International Version, in keeping with the

Alexandrian type manuscripts, once translated this verse (in an early version) as

“No-one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father’s side, has made him known.” John 1:18 NIV 1978

With reference to “the One and Only” a footnote says, “the only begotten”.

In the 2011 version, this text at John 1:18 was changed to read

“No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.” John 1:18

We can see here that instead of “God the One and Only”, the phrase has been changed to read “one and only Son”. The question is though, why the change? Did the NIV translators come to realise that the initial rendering (“God the One and Only”) actually denied the trinity doctrine? There must have been a reason for this change. Whatever the reason, there are those who will say it is conceding that the manuscripts that say *monogenes theos* (only-begotten God) are incorrect. Note that in the Greek, this verse does not include the phrase “who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father”. The NIV is not a word-for-word translation. It is a dynamic equivalent (a thought for thought translation).

It should go without saying that these variants of John 1:18 (*monogenes theos* and *monogenes huios*) cannot have both been written by John so we know that at the very least, one of them must be wrong.

There was always the danger of the copyists, when copying manuscripts, of misreading characters (letters) but one thing that made manuscripts more vulnerable to variants was the *nomina sacra* (sacred names). This was the practise of abbreviating (contracting) oft-used sacred names. These names were such as God, Christ, Lord, Jesus and Son etc. These were usually abbreviated to the first and last letters of the name. In the case of the names *God* and *Son*, one such abbreviation was ΘΣ (God) and ΥΣ (son). This would mean that in order to change the word *God* to *Son*, or vice versa, it would only necessitate changing one letter. This would make it quite easy to accidentally (or deliberately) change. The letters would also have a horizontal line above them. This was to identify it as a contraction. This practice appears to go back to before the 2nd century. Some say that the fact that the name *Jesus*, also the word *Christ*, were contracted, this is evidence that the early Christian writers regarded Christ as deity. This is probably very true but it must be noted that as time progressed, other oft-used words were also contracted.

Scholars point out that when the early church fathers referred to John 1:18 in their writings (pre-dating the council of Nicaea in AD 325), they used both *huios* (Son) and *theos* (God) although the majority usage by far is *huios* (Son). To put it another way: the usage of *theos*, in comparison to *huios*, is extremely small.

All of this though makes it very difficult to ascertain which variant reading is the original although the majority use of *huios* may suggest that this is the correct reading. Some have also suggested that because John, throughout his writings, referred to Christ as the Son of God, it is more than likely that at John 1:18 he wrote *monogenes huios* (only begotten son). On the other hand, some will say that because at John 1:1 he wrote that Christ was God (*theos*), at John 1:18 he could have written *monogenes theos* (only begotten God). It seems therefore that this particular problem, at least with any certainty, will never be resolved. As in many other cases, how this verse will be translated depends to an extent upon which manuscripts are used.

Jesus was a prophet in His own right yet He was far different than anyone who had gone before Him. Others could say, in effect, “listen to me and I will tell you what God is like”. Jesus though is the only One who could truly say, “Look at me and I will show you what God is like”. He is the only One who could, without the slightest misrepresentation, declare God. This was John’s intent in his wording of John 1:18. Christ could do this because He is God. When John wrote these words it was around the end of the first century (c. AD 96). This was now over 60 years since Christ had returned to His Father in Heaven. John could say therefore that Christ had returned to His rightful place “in the bosom of the Father”.

There is nothing in Scripture that would lead us to conclude that Christ has ever forfeited His Godhead. Even when on earth the Godhead was still His own. He still retained those divine attributes that made Him God. As the apostle Paul wrote of Christ

“For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” Colossians 2:9
KJV

“For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form” Colossians 2:9
NASB

This indwelling was not metaphorical. It was real. Paul’s words could only apply to someone who is God. He said that this indwelling was “bodily” (corporeal). This was Christ’s inheritance as the Son of God. He was God from God. Paul had previously written

“For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;” Colossians 1:19
KJV

“For it was the Father’s good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him”
Colossians 1:19 NASB

“For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him” Colossians 1:19
NIV

Throughout the Scriptures, even though Christ is said to be equal with God (Philippians 2:6), the Father is always seen as having the primacy (the pre-

eminence). Never is it the other way around (see 1 Corinthians 3:23, 11:3). For example: The Son is always seen as the mediator. The Father is never portrayed as the mediator. At John 1:1 it says that the Word (Christ) was “*with God*”. It does not say that God was with the Word. It also says in Philippians 2:6 that Christ was equal “*with God*”. It does not say that God was equal with Christ. Paul said to the Colossians that it pleased the Father that in Christ all the fullness of the Godhead should dwell (Colossians 1:19, 2:9). It does not say that it pleased Christ that this fullness should dwell within the Father. God created all things *by* (through) Christ (Hebrews 1:2). It does not say that Christ created all things through God. The Scriptures also say that Christ is the “express image” of God’s person (Hebrews 1:3). It does not say that God is the express image of Christ’s person. We are also told that Christ is the “image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15). It does not say that the invisible God is the image of Christ. The Scriptures are also very clear that it was the Father *who sent* the Son into the world (John 3:16, Romans 8:32, Galatians 4:4). We are not told that this had been an autonomous decision on the part of Christ. In fact the Scriptures reveal that when *all things* are fulfilled (1 Corinthians 15:28), the Son will be subject to the Father. They do not say that the Father will be subject to the Son. This subordination therefore is not only attributable to Christ’s condescension in becoming human but also to His pre-existence and His future.

Christ knew that God was His Father. This is why He regarded His Father as the greater

“Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.” John 14:28

Humility was the hallmark of Christ. It is also the hallmark of all of those who would at last find a place in His kingdom. Jesus said to Mary

“... Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.” John 20:17

This was the assurance that the man Christ Jesus gave to His disciples before He left them (that His Father was the greater). Nevertheless, we are told in another place

“To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.” 2 Corinthians 5:19

That God was in Christ; also that Christ was in God; is an indisputable fact of Scripture (John 14:8:11). How to explain this in human terms though is beyond our understanding. It is a oneness that cannot be explained.

Our God is returning

The Psalmist wrote

“Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.” Psalms 50:3

In similar fashion Isaiah prophesied

“He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.” Isaiah 25:8-9

When speaking of this same event (the return of Jesus), the apostle Paul wrote

“For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18

It is the “Lord himself” who is returning for His people. He will do so with “the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God”. We shall then all shout, “this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us”. God is the Saviour of mankind (1 Timothy 2:3, 4:10, Titus 2:10, 3:4, Jude 25). God is our redeemer.

Throughout the Bible, God speaks of Himself as Saviour and Redeemer. Through the prophet Isaiah He said

“Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour. Isaiah 43:10-11

“Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.” Isaiah 44:6

“Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me.” Isaiah 45:21

“As for our redeemer, the LORD of hosts is his name, the Holy One of Israel.” Isaiah 47:4

“Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go.” Isaiah 48:17

“And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD.” Isaiah 59:20

This led the same prophet to exclaim

“Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O LORD, art our father, our redeemer; thy name is from everlasting.” Isaiah 63:16

In similar fashion, God had said through the prophet Hosea

“Yet I am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but me: for there is no saviour beside me.” Hosea 13:4

God has made it clear that there is no other god but Him, also that there is no other saviour but Him. This He has said on a number of occasions. Interestingly though it was Christ who through Isaiah and Hosea spoke the above words. As Peter tells us

“Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.” 1 Peter 1:9-11

God spoke through Christ. Christ spoke through the prophets. Christ is God our Saviour and redeemer.

We have read above that God said, “I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God”. Very early in the Book of Revelation, Christ said to John

“Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.” Revelation 1:17

“And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;” Revelation 2:8

In closing the vision, Jesus also said to John

“And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.... I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.” Revelation 22:12 –13, 16)

In the Old Testament, God says of Himself that He is the first and the last (see Isaiah 44:6, Isaiah 48:12). In the New Testament Christ says of Himself that He is the first and the last (see Revelation 1:17, 2:8, 22:13). Notice in Revelation 22:12 that He who refers to Himself as the first and the last is the One who will be returning to earth, also at 1:17 and 2:8 it says that He who is the first and the last was dead. This can only mean Christ.

With respect to the return of Jesus, an interesting verse of Scripture is this one.

“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;” Titus 2:13

This is a specific reference to the second coming of Jesus. It is referring to Christ as “Saviour” and “the great God”. Some translations place a different emphasis on this verse.

“while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,” Titus 2:13 NIV

“looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, Titus 2:13 NASB

“in expectation of the fulfilment of our blessed hope--the Appearing in glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ;” Titus 2:13 Weymouth translation

“abidinge the blessing hope and the coming of the glorie of the greet God, and of oure sauour Jhesu Crist;” Titus 2:13 Wycliffe Bible (1395)

In these translations, the emphasis is on the appearing of “glory”. This though does not change the fact that Christ is referred to here as our “Saviour” and “the great God”. In the Interpreter’s Bible it says (after saying that some translate this verse as meaning the Father and the Son)

“It is preferable, however, to suppose with most commentators, ancient as well as modern, that both epithets refer to Jesus, even though nowhere else in the N.T. is Jesus spoken of as **our great God**. This is the natural construction in Greek of two nouns following one article (“the”). (*The Interpreters Bible, Volume 11, pages 539-540, Comments on Titus 2:13*)

Another three commentaries say the same. Note they all say that the parousia (the second coming) never includes the Father – only Christ.

“In these last words not only does the grammar indicate that the inspired writer identified the Great God and the Saviour; not only is there a continuous chain of authorities, reaching from the apostolic age to our own, to this effect; but, further, the fact that “appearing” is a term peculiarly applied to the Son, and never to the Father, and that the immediate context especially refers to Christ, places it almost beyond doubt that our Blessed Lord is here said to be the great God; and that in the words of Ellicott, “this text is a direct, definite, and even studied declaration of the Divinity of the Eternal Son.” (*Thee Rev. Edward Henry Bickersteth, M. A., A practical and Explanatory Commentary on the New Testament*)

“The text, declaring the true hope of the believer to be **the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ**, bears attractive testimony to the deity of Christ. In favour of this translation it can be said that nowhere else in the NT is God the Father said to appear, nor is the adjective **great** used of Him. The most convincing argument, however, is the presence of only one definite article which has the effect of binding together the two titles” (*A Bible Commentary for Today, Edited by G. C. D. Howley, Page 1574, Comments by Alan G. Nute, 1979*)

“This verse is an eloquent expression of Paul’s belief in the divinity of Christ. Sometimes the translation is found: “of the great God [i. e., the Father] and our Saviour Jesus Christ. The following considerations militate against this translation: (1) In the Greek the expression “great God” and “our Saviour Jesus Christ” are governed by a single definite article; (2) the verse refers to the parousia, and everywhere else the glorious manifestation of the parousia pertains to Christ (1 Tm 6:14-15; 2 Tm 4:1; 1 Cor 1:7; 2 Thess 1:7; etc.); (3) the rest of the sentence (v.14) speaks only of Christ and ascribes to him a divine prerogative, the possession of a chosen people.” (*The Jerome Biblical Commentary, R. E. Brown, J. A. Fitzmyer, R. E. Murphy, pages 360-361, Commentary on Titus, 1970*)

The same in principle applies to 2 Peter 1:1

“Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:” 2 Peter 1:1

Most scholars I have read, because there is only one definite article modifying “God” and “Saviour”, favour the Greek construct as referring to one and the same person. In keeping with these scholars, the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary makes this comment (which summarizes it quite well)

“The Greek construction makes it reasonably certain that “God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” refers to one person, Jesus Christ. The phrase may be rendered “our God, even the Saviour Jesus Christ”. (*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, Volume 7, page 595, Comment on 2 Peter 1:1*)

More thoughts on John 1:1

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

The words of John 1:1 are probably the most debated in Scripture. Volumes have been written attempting to explain them. Most of the discussions concern what John meant by the phrase “and the Word was God”. Some have said that John meant to say that Christ was divine or had a divine nature but the fact is if this is what he wanted to say then other Greek words were available to Him. One of these, amongst others, is θεῖος (theios). The beloved physician Luke wrote (note the difference in the three translations of this same verse)

“Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead [θεῖος – theios] is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.” Acts 17:29 KJV

“Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature [θεῖος – theios] is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man.” Acts 17:29) NASB

“So, since we are children of God, we shouldn't suppose that God's essence [θεῖος – theios] resembles gold, silver or stone shaped by human technique and imagination.” Acts 17:29 The Complete Jewish Bible

In order to translate θεῖος, both the New American Standard Bible and the Complete Jewish Bible, like other modern translations, do not use the word Godhead. Instead they say “Divine Nature” and “God's essence” etc. The word θεῖος therefore, if John had wanted to use it, was available to him. In fact it is quite possible that John had read what Luke had written. It is also possible he had read the other Gospels, also what Paul and Peter had written. Remember, John's Gospel was written around the end of the 1st century. Notice how this same Greek word (θεῖος) is translated here

“According as his divine [θεῖος] power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature [θεῖος], having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” 2 Peter 1:3-4

As we can see, Peter refers to “divine nature [θεῖος]”. If at John 1:1c John had only meant to say that Christ had a divine nature then this is the way he could have written it. As it was he used *theos*. This is the same word, although without the definite article, that he used at John 1b. Even if John had written that Christ was divine (or had a divine nature etc.), it would still mean that He is God. Someone cannot have a divine nature and not be God. Pertaining to personal beings we are only aware of three classes of nature. This is divine nature, the

nature of angels, and human nature. In His pre-existence, Christ was none of the latter two therefore He could only be divine. In personality though, He was not the Father. He was the Son of God.

Some have maintained that because John said “the Word was with God (τὸν Θεόν – ton theon), which can be translated as ‘the Word was with *the* God’, that when He wrote, “the Word was God (Θεὸς - theos)” (without the definite article), he is saying that “the Word” is not actually God. This I believe is a misunderstanding of the thought that the Holy Spirit was leading John to convey. I believe that John was ensuring that his readers would take him to mean that the Word was God but not the same person as the Father. To put it another way: John was delineating between God the Father (whom the Word was with) and the Word (who became flesh) yet saying at the same time they were both God.

Quite recently I came across a study of John 1:1 that I found very interesting. It pointed out that in John’s writings alone (John, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John and the Revelation), there are a total of 252 usages of *theos*. The study also noted that 22 of these are without the definite article (John 1:1c, 1:6, 12, 13, 18, 3:2, 21, 6:45, 8:54, 9:16, 33, 13:3, 16:30, 19:7, 20:17(2), 1 John 3:2, 4:12, 2 John 3, 9 and Revelation 21:7) yet all are translated *God*. Four of the instances (not counting John 1:1) are in the prologue to John’s Gospel (verses 1:1-18). Never though would we think of any of these as referring to anyone except *God Himself*: neither would we say any should be understood in a qualitative sense. The conclusion is therefore that the absence of the article does not necessarily mean that it has to be preceded by an indefinite article (in English), neither does it necessitate the word simply being regarded as qualitative. Many other factors, far beyond the scope of this article, need to be taken into consideration.

There is another very important point to consider here. This is that because of the context in which a word is used it can change in meaning. A word does not mean exactly the same every time it is used. This applies to any language. This is certainly the case in English. When determining what an author means by the use of a particular word, context is the all-important factor.

John was the only Gospel writer to use the word ‘theos’ with respect to Jesus. As we noted above, John’s Gospel is a divine theology. Concerning the identity of Christ it was amongst the final revelations that God, through the Bible writers, would give to man. In this respect it should be studied with eager anticipation.

Other verses to consider

There are a number of other verses to consider which show that Christ is God. We shall take a look at these now.

The apostle Paul wrote to his young friend Timothy

“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” 1 Timothy 3:16

This is as it is quoted in the KJV but there are variations. This is because whilst some codices such as the Textus Receptus (from which the KJV was translated) say “God (θεός) was manifest in the flesh”, others say “he [who] (ὁ) was manifest in the flesh”. For example

“Beyond all question, the mystery from which true godliness springs is great: He appeared in the flesh, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.” 1 Timothy 3:16 NIV

Other translations say the same but even if “ὁ (he [who])” is favoured, it still has to be ascertained who the “He” is that was manifest in the flesh. The problem is that the subject of the previous verse is “the church” so syntactically this would not make sense. This is because *he* or *who* cannot not apply to “the church”. In the realisation of this, there is the thought proffered by some that part of the original manuscript was lost (hence the reason for the ‘missing’ antecedent). This though is something that cannot be proven.

It is clear that someone (not something) “was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory”. The question is, who was it? Undoubtedly this was Jesus, but was this all that Paul was saying or was there more? The answer could be in the words “was manifest in the flesh” – or as the NIV says “appeared in the flesh”. This strongly implies that this “He” was not always visible in the flesh. The answer therefore, based upon Scripture, is that no matter whether Paul wrote ὁ or θεός, the One manifest in the flesh is God. This is not an extravagant conclusion. It is simply in keeping with the words of the Gospel writer at John 1:1 and John 1:14 (Christ is God manifest in the flesh).

Another verse that refers to Christ as God is

“Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.” Romans 9:5

Some say the Greek is ambiguous but others take the view that the One who is referred to here as “God” is definitely Christ. The following translations make this view very clear

“Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of the Messiah, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.” Romans 9:5 NIV

“To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.” Romans 9:5 ESV

“They are the descendants of our great ancestors, and they are the earthly family into which Christ was born, who is God over all. Praise him forever! Amen.” Romans 9:5 New Century Bible

Scholars agree that much of the debate, when translating this verse, depends on the usage of punctuation. This is where we must remember that the original manuscripts did not contain punctuation, at least as we know it today. In fact originally, the Greek was written without spaces between the words.

One passage of Scripture which is very often disputed is 1 John 5:19-20

“And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.” 1 John 5:19-20

The question is: when John says, “This is the true God, and eternal life”, to whom is he referring? Is it to God (the Father) or to Jesus Christ? The word “This” requires an antecedent (something or someone to which it previously refers). In this case, grammatically, the antecedent is very difficult to establish. This is because the construction of the Greek is very ambiguous. It certainly has been a continual debate amongst scholars. A quick reading of this verse of course would lead to the conclusion that it was “Jesus Christ” but the nearest antecedent is not always the correct one.

After saying that the KJV translators, by adding “even” to the text, have made the phrase “him that is true” appear to mean Christ, the Interpreter’s Bible says

“Theological controversy has long raged about this passage. But the natural sense of the passage and the characteristic thought of the epistle and the Gospel preclude this interpretation. It is through Christ that we are in God. This God so known is the true God. (*The Interpreter’s Bible, Volume 12, page 301, Comment on 1 John 5:20*)

Many comments similar to the above can be found in various commentaries although others conclude that this “true God” is referring to Christ.

The comment above is a valid one. The word “even” is not in the Greek. If it were not there it would read

“And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.”

In reality, this passage of scripture strongly attests to the deity of Christ. This is because either way it is saying that we, as believers in Christ, “are in him that is true”. The only way that this is possible is if Christ Himself is “in him that is true”. This is because we are in Christ (Romans 8:1, 12:5, 16:7, 1 Corinthians 15:22, Galatians 3:28, Ephesians 2:6, Colossians 1:2, 1 Peter 5:14). To put it another way: we are only in the true God (the Father) because Christ is in the true God (the Father) and we are in Christ. If Christ were not in the true God then we would

not be there either. Jesus said (when Philip asked Him to reveal the Father),

“Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.” John 14:10-11

In the same conversation (a few seconds later) Jesus said

“I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.” John 14:18-20

This having been said, it must also be remembered that John also recorded Jesus as saying

“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” John 17:3

Jesus was here referring to His Father as “the only true God” so at 1 John 5:20, John (who recorded these words of Jesus), would probably not have been referring to Jesus as the same – at least not as regards to personal identity. We need to remember though that at the opening of his Gospel he did say, “the Word [Christ] was God” (John 1:1). Tyndale translated this problematic verse as

“We knowe that the sonne of God is come and hath geven vs a mynde to knowe him which is true: and we are in him that is true through his sonne lesu Christ. This same is very god and eternall lyfe.” 1 John 5:20

That translation is more in keeping with the Scriptures as a whole.

Another verse that tells us that Christ is God can be found in the Book of Acts. This is where Luke records Paul as saying (this was when Paul was warning about false teachings coming into the church after his departure)

“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.” Acts 20:28

The One who purchased the church with His own blood was Christ. Paul is saying here that God purchased it “with his own blood”. There can be no mistaking what Paul is saying. The word for “God”, as used by Luke, is *theos*. Christ therefore is *theos* (God) (See John 1:1).

The Complete Jewish Bible translates the latter words of this verse as “which he won for himself at the cost of his own Son's blood” but the word “Son” is not in the Greek text. This therefore is more of an interpretation (surmising what Paul

meant) rather than what he actually wrote. One could reason (by the use of a figure of speech known as a synecdoche) that God purchased the church with one of His own blood (meaning One of His own family) but this would be reading into this verse something that is not there. I am sure that if Paul had wanted to write that God had purchased the church through the blood of His Son then this is what he would have written. After all, he did repeatedly say (in his writings) that the Son of God, for the salvation of mankind, had spilt His blood (Romans 3:24-25, 5:8-9, 8:32, 1 Corinthians 10:16, Ephesians 1:7, 2:13, Colossians 1:12-14, 1:20, Hebrews 10:19, 12:24, 13:19 etc.)

Another verse to consider is this one

“But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.”
1 Corinthians 8:6

The first thing to note here is that Paul did not write these words in the context of a theological discussion of the Godhead. The backdrop was the polytheistic culture of Corinth. The immediate context was whether or not to eat food that had been offered to idols. It is in this context that the words should be understood. These idols were probably visible representations of these gods. Whilst this is not a matter for discussion here, suffice to note that Paul wrote

“As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.” 1 Corinthians 8:4-6

When Paul wrote, “there is none other God but one”, we cannot doubt that he had in mind *The Shema*

“Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!” Deuteronomy 6:4
NASB

Paul was a Jew. He referred to himself as a “Hebrew of the Hebrews” (Philippians 3:5). He knew that the words of *The Shema*, to the Jewish mind, would only have application to one (single) divine being. The Jews did not conceive God to be a plurality of beings. This can be seen from the ‘fathers’ controversy that they had with Jesus (see John chapter 8). This “one God” is the One to whom they referred to as their Father (John 8:41). If someone had referred to himself as God, they would have considered it blasphemy. We have already seen this in their reaction to what was claimed by Jesus (John 10:30-33, see also John 5:18). In Judaism today, this is still the same. To those who believe Jesus existed, He is still an impostor, a false Messiah. They reject any such notion that He is God or divine.

Those such as Unitarians reason much the same way. This is inasmuch as they say that Christ is not God. They claim that the only person who is God is the One we know as the Father. They say that this is in keeping with where Paul had said that to Christians “there is none other God but one”. To them therefore, this Scripture under discussion (1 Corinthians 8:6-4), particularly verse 6, is something of a major stronghold. They interpret this “one” to be the Father. Like the Jews they insist that this has no application to Christ. Was this though the thought that Paul was attempting to put across here?

The one thing we can be sure of is that the Holy Spirit would never have led Paul, or anyone else for that matter, to contradict those whom He had led, or would lead in the future (like John), to reveal that Christ is God. John said very clearly that, “the Word was God” (John 1:1). Paul therefore could not have been saying that only the Father is God. It must also be remembered that it was Paul who said that in Christ dwelt the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Colossians 2:9). He also wrote to the Hebrews

“But unto the Son he [God the Father] saith, Thy throne, O God [theos], is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God [theos], even thy God [theos], hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands:” Hebrews 1:8-10

We have already noted (see page 40) that these are citations from the Old Testament so we will not go into that again here.

Paul is saying here that the Father called His Son God (theos), so to say that the same apostle was saying in 1 Corinthians 8:4-6 that Christ is not God (not theos) is to ‘force’ an inspired writer to contradict himself, which, in a very real sense, would be a denial of inspiration. Notice too that the Father says of Himself that He is the Son’s God. God the Father also calls the Son “Lord”. This reminds us of Psalm 110:1. Paul also emphasises that all of creation is the work of Christ’s hands. This passage of Scripture strongly confirms Christ as Deity.

Needless to say, those such as the Unitarians also make a strong appeal to where Paul wrote “But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.” Again they would claim that Paul is saying only God the Father is God.

The Greek of the New Testament was written in what we refer to today as uppercase letters (uncials). It had no spaces between the words and had no punctuation – at least not as we know it today in English. This means that where the comma is used, if it is used at all, is something of an arbitrary choice on the part of those translating the Greek into English. In other words, those translating this verse will insert punctuation where they believe it best suits the Greek language according to their understanding of it. Originally therefore, Paul could have been saying “But to us there is but one God the Father, of whom are all

things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ by whom are all things, and we by him.” This would simply be saying there is only one God the Father and there is only one Lord Jesus Christ. This is just a basic Bible fact. It is much the same as how Paul opened all of his epistles – including the one under consideration here (1 Corinthians).

“Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Corinthians 1:3

I will not quote all the others here but if the reader would like to read them for themselves they are as follows - Romans 1:7, 2 Corinthians 1:1-3, Galatians 1:1-3, Ephesians 1:2, Philippians 1:2, Colossians 1:2, 1 Thessalonians 1:1, 2 Thessalonians 1:2, 1 Timothy 1:2, 2 Timothy 1: 2, Titus 1:4 and Philemon 1:3). This is the same as Paul is saying at 1 Corinthians 8:6. Remember too that Paul wrote those verses of 1 Corinthians 8:4-6 in contrast to the many gods worshipped by those of Corinth. He would certainly have avoided anyone reading into his words that Christianity has a plurality of Gods.

Even if it is accepted that the KJV is grammatically correct (all the commas in the correct place etc.), there is still no need to understand Paul as saying that only the Father is God or only the Father should be referred to as God. It can still be taken as saying there is one God the Father of whom are all things and one Lord Jesus Christ by whom are all things. This I believe is how to best understand this verse. It then falls into line with Scripture as a whole. In particular this is with John 1:1-3.

It does not seem reasonable to assume that when saying, “there is none other God but one” and “But to us there is but one God, the Father” that Paul was simply repeating himself. Why should he have repeated himself? He could have simply said in the first place (in keeping with Jewish thought) that “there is none other God but one and this one is the Father”. Could it have been therefore that when he wrote, we have “one God the Father...and one Lord Jesus” that he was simply qualifying what he meant when he said “there is none other God but one”, thus at the same time avoiding controversy? After all, we have seen from Scripture that both the Father and the Son are God; also that there is a certain oneness between them which to us is unexplainable – and Jesus did say that He and the Father were one (John 10:30) – which, as we have seen above, brought about cries of blasphemy from the Jews. They read into His words that He was making Himself God (John 10:33).

There is another thought worth noting. If this text is saying that the only person who is actually God (or can be called God) is God the Father (because Paul said “there is but one God, the Father”) then by the same reasoning, because Paul said there is “one Lord Jesus”, are we precluding God the Father from being Lord (or from being called Lord)? This, in the light of Scripture, would be nonsensical.

In this same text (1 Corinthians 8:4-6), the apostle is also saying that in the creation of all things seen and unseen, Christ was a co-worker with God. To the

believers at Colossae he also wrote

“Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.” Colossians 1:12-17

The Bible is very clear that it is God who created all things (Genesis 1:1). Christ is the One to whom God said “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (Genesis 1:26). The entirety of creation came into existence by (through) the Son. There was nothing made that was not made by Him (John 1:3, Hebrews 1:2, 10). We are told here, “he is before all things”.

So in this text (1 Corinthians 8:4-6) Paul was certainly not denying that Christ was God. That would be reading something into his words that he did not even imply. Paul’s words, like everyone else’s words, must first be understood in their immediate context. As noted previously, he was not making a detailed theological statement concerning the Godhead. If this had been his intention then he may have phrased his words somewhat differently. They would certainly have been in keeping with what God later led John to write “and the Word was God” (John 1:1). John specifically wrote those words in defence of the Christian faith. Paul was writing with respect to eating food offered to the multiplicity of gods worshipped by those of Corinth.

I find it interesting that in all that Ellen White wrote in her 71 years as God’s messenger to His remnant people, never once was she led by the Holy Spirit to use this passage of Scripture (1 Corinthians 8:4-6). This means that everything concerning God and Christ revealed in her writings was achieved without the use of these verses. Not that I making anything of this fact. I am simply making the observation.

It was also Paul who wrote to his young friend Timothy saying

“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; “1 Timothy 2:5

When it comes to defining between divine personalities, God is the Father whilst Christ is the Son of God. In individual personality therefore, Christ is not God. Here Paul was making a simple statement of fact. He is saying that there is only one mediator between God (the Father) and mankind. This he says is the man Christ Jesus. He is not saying that the pre-existent Christ was not God. Again this would be reading something into his words that is not there. This having been said: the man Jesus was never the God Almighty. At Bethlehem he was a new

creation. The human person of Jesus had not previously existed yet He was God manifest in the flesh. As Matthew wrote

“Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.”
Matthew 1:23

Perhaps this one verse sums up all that has been said above. Christ is indeed “God with us”.

Thoughts and observations from the spirit of prophecy

“I recommend to you, dear reader, the Word of God as the rule of your faith and practice. By that Word we are to be judged. God has, in that Word, promised to give visions in the “last days”; not for a new rule of faith, but for the comfort of His people, and to correct those who err from Bible truth. Thus God dealt with Peter when He was about to send him to preach to the Gentiles. (Acts 10.)”. (*Ellen G. White, Early Writings, page 78*)

Contained in the spirit of prophecy there are hundreds of statements concerning the identity of Christ but because space is limited, only a relatively small quantity can be commented upon here. There will be enough though to obtain a comprehensive and balanced view of what God has revealed. In 1904, Seventh-day Adventists received this warning

“Our ministers must be very careful not to enter into controversy in regard to the personality of God. This is a subject that they are not to touch. It is a mystery, and the enemy will surely lead astray those who enter into it. We know that Christ came in person to reveal God to the world. God is a person, and Christ is a person. Christ is spoken of in the Word as “the brightness of His Father’s glory, and the express image of His person.” (*Ellen G. White, Ms 46, May 18th 1904*)

Although Christ is God, we need to, when speaking of personalities, clearly distinguish between Him and God the Father. They are not the one and the same person. As the same author wrote in 1905

“The Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father, is truly God in infinity, but not in personality.” (*Ellen G. White, Ms 116, December 19th 1905*)

Notice here who is said to be “God in infinity” It is Christ Himself. Infinity means endlessness, eternity, absence of end, more beyond etc. This is why Christ is God in the person of the Son. In infinity He is God. He is not though, as a begotten Son, God in personality. This is in keeping with where Jesus said to His Father

“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” John 17:3

To the youth in 1897 Ellen White wrote

“From eternity there was a complete unity between the Father and the Son. They were two, yet little short of being identical; two in individuality, yet one in spirit, and heart, and character.” (*Ellen G. White, Youth’s Instructor 16th December 1897 ‘The New Commandment part 1’*)

There is a difference between the Father and the Son. They are not exactly the same. One difference is that the Father is unbegotten whilst the Son is begotten.

“Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.” The Father in heaven has a voice and person which Christ expressed.” (*Ellen G. White, Ms 92 1898, July 6th 1898, ‘The revelation of God’*)

In the person of His only begotten Son, God has expressed His “voice” and His “person”. This He has done in both Old and New Testament times (1 Peter 1:9-11, Hebrews 1:1).

Here are some interesting examples of Christ’s relationship to the Father

“Who is Christ?—He is the only begotten Son of the living God. He is to the Father as a word that expresses the thought,—as a thought made audible. Christ is the word of God.” (*Ellen G. White, Youth’s Instructor, 28th June 1894, ‘Grow in grace’*)

“By coming to dwell with us, Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels. He was the Word of God,—God’s thought made audible.” (*Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, page 19, ‘God with us’*)

“As speech is to thought, so is Christ to the invisible God. He is the manifestation of the Father, and is called the Word of God.” (*Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times, 15th November 1899 ‘The Law Revealed in Christ’*)

Although Christ was equal with God (Philippians 2:5-6), this equality was because God had deemed it to be so (Colossians 1:19). Christ is the begotten Son. God is His Father. In this sense He respectfully regarded His Father as having the pre-eminence (the only true God, see John 14:28 and 17:3). This is why the Scriptures say of Christ (Michael) when Moses died

“Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.” Jude 1:9

Ellen White commented

“Moses passed through death, but Michael came down and gave him life

before his body had seen corruption. Satan tried to hold the body, claiming it as his; but Michael resurrected Moses and took him to heaven. Satan railed bitterly against God, denouncing Him as unjust in permitting his prey to be taken from him; but Christ did not rebuke His adversary, though it was through his temptation that the servant of God had fallen. He meekly referred him to His Father, saying, "The Lord rebuke thee." (Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, page 164)

Although Christ considered Himself equal with God, here He is seen respectfully and humbly recognising His Father as the One to whom Satan is ultimately responsible. As God He had every right to rebuke Satan. Instead He revealed the meekness of character He demands of His followers. Christ was acknowledging His place as a son - the only begotten of His Father.

Through the spirit of prophecy regarding the apostasy of Lucifer in the courts of Heaven, we have been given some very precious insights. Here I would like to share a few of them. They tell us so much.

"The great Creator assembled the heavenly host, that he might in the presence of all the angels confer special honor upon his Son. The Son was seated on the throne with the Father, and the heavenly throng of holy angels was gathered around them. The Father then made known that it was ordained by himself that Christ should be equal with himself; so that wherever was the presence of his Son, it was as his own presence. His word was to be obeyed as readily as the word of the Father. His Son he had invested with authority to command the heavenly host. Especially was he to work in union with himself in the anticipated creation of the earth and every living thing that should exist upon it." (Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, January 9th 1879, 'The Great Controversy Between Christ and His Angels, and Satan and His Angels', see also *The Spirit of Prophecy Volume 1* page 17 1870)

"The beams of glory enshrouding the eternal God, once rested constantly upon him [Lucifer]. But, not content with his position, tho honored above the heavenly host, he began to covet the glory with which the Father had invested the Son. Lucifer desired to be first in heaven." (Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, June 10th 1903,)

"Though all his glory was from God, this mighty angel [Lucifer] came to regard it as pertaining to himself. Not content with his position, though honored above the heavenly host, he ventured to covet homage due alone to the Creator. Instead of seeking to make God supreme in the affections and allegiance of all created beings, it was his endeavor to secure their service and loyalty to himself. And coveting the glory with which the infinite Father has invested His Son, this prince of angels aspired to power that was the prerogative of Christ alone." (Ellen G. White, *Ms 125* 1907, 'Lessons From the Visions of Ezekiel' St. Helena, California, July 4, 1906)

Notice that in each of these statements it is said that God had “invested” His Son with glory and with authority. Notice too it said in the first of these quotes, “The Father then made known that it was **ordained by himself** that Christ should be equal with himself”. This equality of Christ with God therefore was by the pleasure of the Father. This is exactly as we are told in the Scriptures.

“For it pleased the Father that in him [in Christ] should all fulness dwell;”
Colossians 1:19

It is important to note too (in the above quotes) that we are told that the beginning of sin was when Lucifer “**began to covet the glory with which the Father had invested the Son**”. This investing therefore had been carried out prior to the outbreak of sin and prior to the council in Heaven.

Ellen White, in her book *Patriarchs and Prophets* – which she said had been “especially adapted”, along with *The Great Controversy*, for the newcomers to the faith so that they may be “established in the truth” (see *Letter 229 1903 to Edson and W. C. White*) – we find the following statements (note the paragraphs are not contiguous)

“Though all his [Lucifer’s] glory was from God, this mighty angel came to regard it as pertaining to himself. Not content with his position, though honored above the heavenly host, he ventured to covet homage due alone to the Creator. Instead of seeking to make God supreme in the affections and allegiance of all created beings, it was his endeavor to secure their service and loyalty to himself. **And coveting the glory with which the infinite Father had invested His Son, this prince of angels aspired to power that was the prerogative of Christ alone.**” (*Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, page 35, ‘Why was sin permitted’*)

“**The King of the universe summoned the heavenly hosts before Him, that in their presence He might set forth the true position of His Son and show the relation He sustained to all created beings.** The Son of God shared the Father’s throne, and the glory of the eternal, self-existent One encircled both....Before the assembled inhabitants of heaven the King declared that none but Christ, the Only Begotten of God, could fully enter into His purposes, and to Him it was committed to execute the mighty counsels of His will.” (*Ibid page 36*)

“**The exaltation of the Son of God as equal with the Father** was represented as an injustice to Lucifer, who, it was claimed, was also entitled to reverence and honor. If this prince of angels could but attain to his true, exalted position, great good would accrue to the entire host of heaven; for it was his object to secure freedom for all. But now even the liberty which they had hitherto enjoyed was at an end; for an absolute Ruler had been appointed them, and to His authority all must pay homage. **Such were the subtle deceptions that through the wiles of Lucifer were fast obtaining in the heavenly courts.**

There had been no change in the position or authority of Christ. Lucifer's

envy and misrepresentation and his claims to equality with Christ had made necessary a statement of the true position of the Son of God; but this had been the same from the beginning. Many of the angels were, however, blinded by Lucifer's deceptions." (*Ibid page 38*)

We can see from the above that the Father's investing of the Son with equality, authority and glory took place prior to the outbreak of sin - not afterwards. Ellen White explained that from the beginning there had been "no change in the position or authority of Christ". Notice too that we are told that it was Satan's envy of Christ that "made necessary" this statement of Christ's true position as the only begotten of God.

Each of the above spirit of prophecy quotations is in keeping with the begotten concept. This is how the Son came to be "invested" with equality, glory and authority. It was when, by the pleasure of the Father, He was begotten. It is also why the fullness of the Godhead dwelt within Christ bodily.

In 1894, Ellen White, in a letter addressed to *Friends on Pitcairn Island*, wrote the following

"Christ claimed to be the only begotten of the Father, but men encased in unbelief, barricaded with prejudice, denied the holy and the just One. He was charged with blasphemy, and was condemned to a cruel death, but He burst the fetters of the tomb, and rose from the dead triumphant, and over the rent sepulchre of Joseph He declared, "I am the resurrection and the Life."'" (*Ellen G. White, Letter 65a 1894, to Friends on Pitcairn Island, January 1st 1894*)

The major problem that the Jews had with Christ was His claim to be the Son of God. This to the Jews was blasphemy (John 10:36, 19:7). For this they said He was worthy of death. Christ repeatedly claimed God as His Father.

We are told in the Scriptures that after Jesus had said that He and His Father were one (John 10:30), the Jews took up stones to stone Him (10:31). Jesus then asked for what of His works did they want to stone Him. They replied

"...For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." John 10:33

Concerning this event we find in the *Review and Herald*

"Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him because He not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was His Father, making himself equal with God." The whole nation called God their Father, and if Jesus had done this in the same sense in which they did, the Pharisees would not have been so enraged. But they accused Jesus of blasphemy, showing that they understood that Christ claimed God as His Father in the very highest sense." (*Ellen G. White, Review and Herald March 5th 1901, 'Lessons from*

the Christ-life')

This “very highest sense” can only be a literal sense. There is no higher sense.

Returning our thoughts to John’s Gospel for a moment: With respect to John’s opening words (John 1:1-4), Ellen White made this interesting observation

“How precious are these words! By them some have been led to believe in Christ as the Son of God. ... The writer of these words plainly shows that Jesus Christ is one with the Father. Christ is called the Word. He is the first-begotten of the Father.” (*Ellen G. White, Ms 111 1903, 'October 22nd 1903, That they may be one; As we are one'*)

This begs a very interesting question. Why would John saying that the “Word was God” lead people to believe in Christ as the Son of God? Some would maintain that to believe He was God was enough in itself. As we noted at the beginning of this study, John said he had written his Gospel to show that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. The first proof John offered was that Christ “was God” (John 1:1). This is exactly the same as Ellen White is saying here. As was also said earlier in this article, the only way that Christ could be God is if He was first begotten of God. This also is what Ellen White is pointing out here. She says He is “the first-begotten of the Father”. Notice too her remarks about John’s words showing Christ to be “one with the Father”. This shows that this oneness has everything to do with His divinity. Nowhere though has it been explained to us. This is why concerning it we should not speculate.

Some have attempted to put across the idea that in her book *The Desire of Ages*, Ellen White spoke of Christ in a different way than what was then, in 1898 when the book was published, generally believed and taught by Seventh-day Adventists (that Christ was begotten of God). They often quote her where she says, “In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived” (page 530). They maintain that this shows she did not believe that Christ was begotten. Unfortunately they usually fail to show that she had previously written in the same book

“All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all.” (*Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, page 21, 'God with us' 1898*)

This is in keeping where Jesus said

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;” John 5:25-26

In fact in 1908, the following was published in the Lake Union Herald

“God has sent His Son to communicate His own life to humanity. Christ declares, ‘I live by the Father,’ My life and His being one. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him. ‘For as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself; and hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man.’ The head of every man is Christ, as the head of Christ is God. ‘And ye are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.’” (Ellen G. White, *Lake Union Herald*, December 2nd 1908, ‘Extracts from unpublished Testimonies’)

From the above we can see the reason why the life that is in Christ is “life, original, unborrowed, underived”. It is because it is the Father's life (the life of God). The Father is said to be the source of this life. As it says here, it is “the Father's life” that flows “through the beloved Son”. As Jesus made clear, the Father who has life in Himself had “given” Him (God's Son) to have life in Himself (John 5:26). Here again we see the Father in the primacy. As Ellen White said, the Son had “received” this life from the Father. The concept is very simple to understand. The Father and the Son 'share' the same divine life (the life of God) yet the Father is the primal source. Notice that the Father is referred to as “the great Source of all”. Again as it says here “God has sent His Son to communicate His own life to humanity”.

These words and thoughts from the spirit of prophecy do not deny the begotten concept. They confirm it. They are describing the *type* of life that is in Christ (divine life – divinity). This is why it is referred to as “life, original, unborrowed, underived”. Divinity is self-existing. For its existence it does not depend upon anything else. We are told here, “All things Christ received from God”. There are no exceptions. He was the heir of all things (Hebrews 1:2). This again is the begotten concept.

It is now a well-known fact of history that throughout the entire time of Ellen White's ministry, also for decades after her death, the belief of Seventh-day Adventists concerning Christ was that in eternity He was begotten of God therefore He is truly the Son of God. In fact in 1936, by the General Conference, this same belief was said to be the official belief of Seventh-day Adventists. You can read about this here

<http://theprophetstillspeaks.co.uk/godhead/1936sabbathschoolstudies.pdf>

This belief concerning Christ (that He was begotten of God) continued to be published for decades afterwards. Needless to say, the entire membership of a denomination cannot change their beliefs overnight.

At times, coupled with the knowledge that Seventh-day Adventists were not a trinitarian denomination, this Sonship belief led some (usually of other denominations) to erroneously conclude that we, as a church, did not believe in the divinity of Christ. In 1893, Ellen White wrote of this misunderstanding. She did so by relating the story of how the church had been refused permission to use a

hall for evangelistic purposes. This was in New Zealand. She said that a schoolteacher was telling people that Seventh-day Adventists did not believe in the divinity of Christ. This is why permission was not granted. She explained

“This man [the schoolteacher] may not have known what our faith is on this point, but he was not left in ignorance. He was informed that there is not a people on earth who hold more firmly to the truth of Christ's pre-existence than do Seventh-day Adventists.” (Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, 5th December 1893, ‘An appeal for the Australasian field’)

This was confirmation from God’s messenger that what we were teaching then (in 1893) about Christ’s pre-existence was the truth. How else can her words be interpreted? This of course was when we taught that in eternity Christ was begotten of God. In further endorsement of this, Ellen White penned these words

“A complete offering has been made; for "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son,"-- not a son by creation, as were the angels, nor a son by adoption, as is the forgiven sinner, but a Son begotten in the express image of the Father's person, and in all the brightness of his majesty and glory, one equal with God in authority, dignity, and divine perfection. In him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” (Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, 30th May 1895, ‘Christ our complete salvation’)

Here are seen three acts of God. These are creating, adopting and begetting. They are three entirely different actions. Here Ellen White was confirming Seventh-day Adventists in their belief that in eternity Christ is begotten of God therefore He is truly the Son of God. Note she makes clear that He is not created but begotten.

Here again we need to remember what has been said above regarding *monogenes*. Christ is *the only begotten* (monogenes) of God. He is of God’s very being (of the one and same genus of God).

Six weeks later Ellen White wrote (again in harmony in what was taught at that time by Seventh-day Adventists)

“The Eternal Father, the unchangeable one, gave his only begotten Son, tore from his bosom Him who was made in the express image of his person, and sent him down to earth to reveal how greatly he loved mankind.” (Ellen G. White, *Review & Herald* 9th July 1895 ‘The Duty of the Minister and the People’)

This reminds us of where John said

“No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” John 1:18

Here it is said that Jesus “is in the bosom of the Father”. This was 60 years or so

after Jesus had returned to His Father.

In the previous spirit of prophecy statement, Christ is said to be “a Son begotten in the express image of the Father's person” whilst in the latter it says He “was made in the express image” of the Father's person. Both “made” and “begotten” are actions (acts of God). It was this Sonship belief that was generally held at that time (1895) by Seventh-day Adventists. It was not believed that Christ is a created being but that He is begotten of God therefore He is truly the Son of God. It should be recognised here that because Ellen White says that Christ was “begotten in the express image of the Father's person” (not created), saying that Christ was “made in the express image of his person” does not mean created but begotten.

This shows too that it was *prior* to coming to earth that Christ existed in the “express image” of God's person, which means of course He was begotten prior to both the virgin birth and the resurrection. As Ellen White explained

“Before Christ came in the likeness of men, he existed in the express image of his Father. He thought it not robbery to be equal with God. Nevertheless he voluntarily emptied himself, and took the form of a servant. He was the incarnate God, the light of heaven and earth. In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” (*Ellen G. White, Youth's Instructor, December 20th 1900*)

This is why the words of the Psalmist “I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee” (Psalm 2:7) have their original application to Christ in eternity. Christ was begotten in eternity.

We studied above where the Scriptures speak of Christ as being the “express image” of God's person (Hebrews 1:3) so we will not go into that again here. Suffice it to note that Hebrews 1:3 is not referring to the incarnation but to Christ's pre-existence (as confirmed here through the spirit of prophecy).

In 1905, again in support of the beliefs taught by Seventh-day Adventists, Ellen White wrote the following

“In His incarnation He gained in a new sense the title of the Son of God. Said the angel to Mary, “The power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” While the Son of a human being, He became the Son of God in a new sense.” (*Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times August 2nd 1905, 'Christ our only hope'*)

If in the incarnation Christ became the Son of God in a “new sense”, then previous to the incarnation He must have been the Son of God in a different sense. In other words, there are two senses in which Christ is the Son of God. The first was (in His pre-incarnate state) as the only begotten of God whilst the second was His birth from Mary. Note that this was written in 1905, which was 7

years after the publication of the *Desire of Ages*. This was in keeping where she penned these words in a letter addressed to John Harvey Kellogg (this was two years earlier in 1903)

“When Christ first announced to the heavenly host His mission and work in the world, He declared that He was to leave His position of dignity and disguise His holy mission by assuming the likeness of a man **when in reality He was the Son of the infinite God.**” (*Ellen G. White, letter, to J. H. Kellogg, Letter No. K-303, August 29th 1903*)

There can be no mistaking Ellen White’s beliefs concerning Christ. She believed that He was the Son of God, begotten of God in eternity.

In 1890 Ellen White informed Seventh-day Adventists

“The world’s Redeemer was equal with God. His authority was as the authority of God. **He declared that he had no existence separate from the Father.** The authority by which he spoke, and wrought miracles, was expressly his own, **yet he assures us that he and the Father are one.**” (*Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, January 7th 1890, ‘Christ revealed the Father’*)

Christ does not exist separately from the Father. He is begotten of the Father. Again our thoughts are returned to the oneness that exists between the Father and the Son.

When reading these statements, Seventh-day Adventists could only conclude that once again through Ellen White, God was confirming them in their begotten (Sonship) belief. What other conclusion could they have drawn? If Christ is not begotten of God then God’s messenger is guilty of having led a great many people to believe error.

The same year (1890), in a letter to her good friend Judson Washburn, she wrote the following (after quoting John 3:16)

“God’s love for the world was not manifest because He sent His Son, but because He loved the world He sent His Son into the world that divinity clothed with humanity might touch humanity, while divinity lay hold of infinity. Though sin had produced a gulf between man and his God, divine benevolence provided a plan to bridge that gulf. **And what material did He use? A part of Himself. The brightness of the Father’s glory came to a world all seared and marred with the curse, and in His own divine character, in His own divine body,** bridged the gulf and opened a channel of communication between God and man.” (*Ellen G. White, letter 38a 1890, to J. S. Washburn, September 18th 1890*)

Here it is said that in order to bridge the gap between God and man, the “**brightness of the Father’s glory**” came to earth “**in His own divine body**”. This is with reference to how Christ is described in Hebrews 1:3. Note too that Ellen

White wrote that in the divine plan to save mankind, the “material” that God used was “A part of Himself”. This again is the begotten concept. This is also very interesting because she wrote of Adam (this was when Eve tempted him to partake of the forbidden fruit)

“He [Adam] understood the high destiny opened to the human race should they remain faithful to God. Yet all these blessings were lost sight of in the fear of losing that one gift which in his eyes outvalued every other. Love, gratitude, loyalty to the Creator--all were overborne by love to Eve. **She was a part of himself**, and he could not endure the thought of separation.” (*Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, page 56, ‘The temptation and the fall’*)

Was Ellen White referring here to the fact that Eve had been formed from one of Adam’s ribs (Genesis 2:21-24) or was this just a reference to them being husband and wife? Whatever the truth of the matter, we know that a little earlier in the previous chapter she wrote

“Eve was created from a rib taken from the side of Adam, signifying that she was not to control him as the head, nor to be trampled under his feet as an inferior, but to stand by his side as an equal, to be loved and protected by him. **A part of man, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, she was his second self**, showing the close union and the affectionate attachment that should exist in this relation.” (*Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, page 46, ‘The Creation’*)

Notice it is said that Eve was Adam’s “second self”. Why? It was because she was bone of Adam’s bone and flesh of his flesh. The union could not be closer. The material that God had used to produce Eve was from Adam himself. This is the same in principle regarding Christ. Ellen White said that the material God had used to provide for our salvation was “A part of Himself” (see above). Eve being made from the side of Adam paralleled Christ being brought forth of God. It can be said therefore that because Christ was God from God, He is God’s second self.

In keeping with the begotten concept, as explained above, Ellen White also penned these very significant words

“I wish that finite minds could see and sense the great love of the infinite God: His great self-denial, His self-sacrifice, in assuming humanity. God humbled Himself and became man and humbled Himself to die, and not only to die, but to die an ignominious death.” (*Ellen G. White, Letter 37 1887, to E. J. Waggoner and A. T. Jones, February 18th 1887*)

“Jesus is attractive. He is full of love, mercy, and compassion. He proposes to be our friend, to walk with us through all the rough pathways of life. **He says to you, I am the Lord thy God**, walk with me, and I will fill thy path with light.” (*Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, August 2nd 1881, ‘Rest for the weary’*)

“When we look with the eye of faith upon the cross of Calvary, and see our sins laid upon the victim hanging in weakness and ignominy there,--when we grasp the fact that this is God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace,--we are led to exclaim, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us!" (Ellen G. White, *Youth's Instructor*, 11th February 1897, 'The Mind of Christ')

“Christ is God as well as man. He who was with the Father before the world was became flesh, and dwelt among us. We may behold His glory.” (Ellen G. White, *Letter 96 1902, to P. T. Magan and E. A. Sutherland*, July 4th 1902)

“Christ was God, but he did not appear as God. He veiled the tokens of divinity, which had commanded the homage of angels and called forth the adoration of the universe of God. He made himself of no reputation, took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of sinful flesh.” (Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, 20th February 1893, 'The plan of salvation', see also *Signs of the Times* January 5th 1915)

“Christ had not ceased to be God when He became man. Though He had humbled Himself to humanity, the Godhead was still His own. Christ alone could represent the Father to humanity, and this representation the disciples had been privileged to behold for over three years.” (Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 663, 'Let not your heart be troubled')

“What did Jesus do? He who was rich for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might become rich. The mysterious Godhead descended to our rescue.” (Ellen G. White, *Letter 72 1897 to Bro and Sister Haskell*, December 1st 1897)

“Christ was God in the flesh. As the son of David, he stood forth a perfect type of true manhood, bold in doing his duty, and of the strictest integrity, yet full of love, compassion, and tender sympathy. In his miracles he revealed himself as Lord. When he was asked by Philip to show him the Father, he answered, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." (Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, Volume 3 page 259, 1878, 'Ascension of Christ')

“What an ocean of love is circulating, like a divine atmosphere, around the world! What manner of love is this, that the eternal God should adopt human nature in the person of his Son, and carry the same into the highest heaven!” (Ellen G. White, *Youth's Instructor*, 29th July 1897, 'The gift of God's grace')

“In plain language the Saviour taught the world that the tenderness, the compassion, and love that he manifested toward man, were the very attributes of his Fathers in heaven. Whatever doctrine of grace he presented, whatever promise of joy, whatever deed of love, whatever divine attraction he exhibited, had its source in the Father of all. In the person of

Christ we behold the eternal God engaged in an enterprise of boundless mercy toward fallen man. Christ clothed his divinity with humanity, that his humanity might touch humanity, and divinity reach divinity." (Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, August 20th 1894, 'The Bible to be understood by all')

"We are called upon to behold the Lord our Father in the person of his Son. Christ came in the robe of the flesh, with his glory subdued in humanity, that lost man might communicate with him and live." (Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, 20th January 1890, 'God made manifest in Christ')

"As a member of the human family, Jesus was mortal; but as God, He was the Fountain of Life to the world. He could in His divine person have withstood the advances of death and refused to come under its dominion. He might even in His human nature have withstood the inroads of disease, His divine nature imparting vitality and undecaying vigor to the human. But He voluntarily laid down His life, that He might give life and bring immortality to light. He must bear the sins of the world and endure the penalty that rolled like a mountain upon His divine soul. The whole treasure of heaven was poured out in one gift to save fallen men. The Saviour brought into His human nature all the life-giving energies that human beings may need and will receive. Wondrous union of man and God!

The Son of God entered into the plan for man's salvation, knowing all the steps that He must descend in order to make expiation for the sins of the burdened, groaning world. What humility was this! It amazed the angels. Tongue can never describe it, the imagination cannot take it in—the eternal Word consented to be made flesh; God became man. But He stepped still lower; the Man must humble Himself to bear insult, reproach, shameful accusations, and abuse." (Ellen G. White, MS 141 1901, 'The divine and human nature of Christ')

"The apostle would call our attention from ourselves to the Author of our salvation. He presents before us his two natures, divine and human. Here is the description of the divine: "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." He was "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person."

Now, of the human: "He was made in the likeness of man: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death." He voluntarily assumed human nature. It was his own act, and by his own consent. He clothed his divinity with humanity. He was all the while as God, but he did not appear as God. He veiled the demonstrations of Deity which had commanded the homage, and called forth the admiration, of the universe of God. He was God while upon earth, but he divested himself of the form of God, and in its stead took the form and fashion of a man. He walked the earth as a man. For our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich. He laid aside his glory and his majesty. He was God, but the glories of the form of God he for a while relinquished."

(Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, July 5th 1897, 'Christ man's example')

"In contemplating the incarnation of Christ in humanity, we stand baffled before an unfathomable mystery, that the human mind cannot comprehend. The more we reflect upon it, the more amazing does it appear. **How wide is the contrast between the divinity of Christ and the helpless infant in Bethlehem's manger! How can we span the distance between the mighty God and a helpless child?** And yet the Creator of worlds, he in whom was the fulness of the Godhead bodily, was manifest in the helpless babe in the manger." *(Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times July 30, 1896, 'Child life of Jesus')*

"He hungered, he thirsted, he was weary, he slept, he wept, and yet he was the blameless Son of God, **he was God in the flesh.** He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin, and we have not a high-priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." *(Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, October 23rd 1894, 'Truth to be rescued from error')*

"The world was made by him, "and without him was not anything made that was made." If Christ made all things, he existed before all things. The words spoken in regard to this are so decisive that no one need be left in doubt. **Christ was God essentially, and in the highest sense. He was with God from all eternity, God over all, blessed forevermore.**" *(Ellen White, Review and Herald, 5th April 1906, 'The Word made flesh')*

This final sentence reminds us of Romans 9:5.

From the above it can clearly be seen that through the spirit of prophecy we have been told that Christ is both the only begotten Son of God and God. This is the very same conclusion we reached from Scripture (see above). It is that Christ is God in infinity but not in personality. In personality, Christ is the Son of God. In keeping with this Ellen White explained

"Since the sin of our first parents there has been no direct communication between God and man. The Father has given the world into the hands of Christ, that through His mediatorial work He may redeem man and vindicate the authority and holiness of the law of God. All the communion between heaven and the fallen race has been through Christ. It was the Son of God that gave to our first parents the promise of redemption. It was He who revealed Himself to the patriarchs. Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses understood the gospel. They looked for salvation through man's Substitute and Surety. These holy men of old held communion with the Saviour who was to come to our world in human flesh; and some of them talked with Christ and heavenly angels face to face.." *(Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, page 366, 'The law and the covenants')*

"After the fall, Christ became Adam's instructor. **He acted in God's stead** toward humanity, saving the race from immediate death. He took upon Him

the work of mediator between God and man.” (Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*. 29th May 1901, ‘God’s purpose for us’)

“Ever since Adam's sin, the human race had been cut off from direct communion with God; the intercourse between heaven and earth had been through Christ; but now that Jesus had come "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. 8:3), the Father Himself spoke. He had before communicated with humanity through Christ; now He communicated with humanity in Christ. Satan had hoped that God's abhorrence of evil would bring an eternal separation between heaven and earth. But now it was manifest that the connection between God and man had been restored.” (Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages*, page 116, ‘The temptation’)

In individual personality (personal identity) Christ is identified as the Son of God. It is the Father who in personality is spoken of as God. We can see also that since the fall of man, there has been no direct communication between God (the Father) and humanity. All communication has been through the Son (see 1 Peter 1:9-11).

“It was Christ that spoke to His people through the prophets. The apostle Peter, writing to the Christian church, says that the prophets “prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the *Spirit of Christ* which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.” 1 Peter 1:10, 11. It is the voice of Christ that speaks to us through the Old Testament. “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” Revelation 19:10.” (Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 366, ‘The Law and the Covenants’)

“It is the voice of Christ that speaks through the prophets and patriarchs, from the days of Adam even down to the closing scenes of time. This truth was not discerned by the Jews who rejected Jesus, and it is not discerned by many professing Christians today.” (Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy Volume 2*, page 209, ‘Jesus at Emmaus’)

“Christ came into the world to do a special work. He did not come to originate truth. It was already originated. He did not come to set aside what patriarchs and prophets had spoken; for he himself had spoken through these representative men. He himself was the originator of truth. Every jewel of truth came from Christ.” (Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, 2nd September 1889, ‘The Christian’s Commission’)

“Through Christ had been communicated every ray of divine light that had ever reached our fallen world. It was He who had spoken through everyone that throughout the ages had declared God’s word to man.” (Ellen G. White, *Education*, page 73, ‘The Teacher sent from God, 1903’)

“Jesus Christ inspired those prophets to look down from age to age, from

century to century, and there to see every trial that should come upon every one of the human beings whom God has created. "Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." (*Ellen G. White, Ms 12, 1895, Sermon/Thoughts on 1 Peter Chapter 1, Williamstown, Australia, May 19, 1895*)

"All the divine revelations given to human beings come through Christ. He is the priest and king of His church, and He unfolds to His people in every place the methods that He will use in His government." (*Ellen G. White, Ms 22, 1905, 'Christ Our Only Hope', March 7th 1904*)

This lends itself to this precious insight

"It was Christ who spoke the law on Mount Sinai, and He knew the bearing of all its precepts, the glory and majesty of the law of heaven. In his sermon on the mount, Christ defined the law, and sought to inculcate on the minds of his hearers its far-reaching claims." (*Ellen G. White, Bible Echo, 19th February 1894, 'Christ as teacher', see also Review and Herald, 28th November 1893*)

"It was Christ who spoke the law from Sinai. It was Christ who gave the law to Moses, engraven on tables of stone. It was his Father's law; and Christ says, "I and my Father are one." (*Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, 27th September 1881, 'The exalted position of the law of God', see also Signs of the Times 4th September 1884*)

"Christ was not only the leader of the Hebrews in the wilderness--the Angel in whom was the name of Jehovah, and who, veiled in the cloudy pillar, went before the host--but it was He who gave the law to Israel. Amid the awful glory of Sinai, Christ declared in the hearing of all the people the ten precepts of His Father's law. It was He who gave to Moses the law engraved upon the tables of stone." (*Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, page 366, 'The law and the covenants'*)

"The ten commandments were spoken by God Himself, and were written by his own hand." (*Ellen G. White, Great Controversy, page 4, 1888 edition*)

"God spoke this law from Sinai in awful grandeur, in the hearing of all Israel, and he wrote it with his own fingers upon tables of stone, not for his chosen people only, but for all men, to the close of time." (*Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times, 28th February 1884, 'The Creation Sabbath'*)

"A few weeks only had passed since they had made a solemn covenant with God to obey his voice. They had listened to the words of God's law, spoken in awful grandeur from Sinai's mount, amid thunderings and lightnings and earthquakes. They had heard the declaration from the lips of God himself, "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out

of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” (Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald July 29th 1873, ‘Moses and Aaron’*)

Ellen White alternates between saying that it was Christ who spoke the Ten Commandments and God who spoke them. The Bible very clearly says that God spoke them (Exodus 20:1-2). Notice particularly she said that the Hebrews “had heard the declaration from the lips of God himself”.

If, as Ellen White says, it was Christ who spoke the 10 Commandments, then it was Christ who spoke these words

“I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”
Exodus 20:2-3

Very interestingly we find in the spirit of prophecy this comment.

“When they came to Sinai, he [God] took occasion to refresh their minds in regard to his requirements. Christ and the Father, standing side by side upon the mount, with solemn majesty proclaimed the ten commandments, placing in the very center of the decalogue the Sabbath command.” (Ellen G. White, *Historical sketches of the foreign missions of the Seventh-day Adventists, page 231*)

Again our thoughts return to the mysterious oneness that exists between God and Christ.

As already concluded, it was Christ who led the Hebrews in the wilderness. Now notice who appeared to Moses in the burning bush.

“It was Christ who from the bush on Mount Horeb spoke to Moses saying, “I Am That I Am. . . . Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I Am hath sent me unto you.” Ex. 3:14. This was the pledge of Israel's deliverance. So when He came “in the likeness of men,” He declared Himself the I Am. The Child of Bethlehem, the meek and lowly Saviour, is God “manifest in the flesh.” 1 Tim. 3:16.” (Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages p. 24 ‘God with us’*)

“The Shekinah had departed from the sanctuary, but in the Child of Bethlehem was veiled the glory before which angels bow. This unconscious babe was the promised seed, to whom the first altar at the gate of Eden pointed. This was Shiloh, the peace giver. It was He who declared Himself to Moses as the I am. It was He who in the pillar of cloud and of fire had been the guide of Israel.” (Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages, page 52, ‘The Dedication’*)

“Before Abraham was, I am.” Christ is the pre-existent, self-existent Son of God. The message He gave to Moses to give to the children of Israel was,

"Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I Am hath sent me unto you." The prophet Micah writes of Him, "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of Thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." (*Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times, 29th August 1900, 'Resistance to light. No. 3)*

"To Christ Himself we address the inquiry, "Who art thou?" Listen! "Before Abraham was, I am." "I and my Father are one." "As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father which hath sent him." (*Ellen G. White, Letter 65 1898, to Howe F. Griggs)*

Amazingly, the little baby nestling in the manger at Bethlehem was the One who had appeared to Moses in the burning bush

"Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God. And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;" Exodus 3:6-7

And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, the LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations." Exodus 3:14-15

At Bethlehem the I AM had become flesh. What an incredible condescension on the part of our God. Over 30 years later Jesus identified Himself with the I AM (John 8:58). In *The Desire of Ages* we find these words

"This great purpose had been shadowed forth in types and symbols. The burning bush, in which Christ appeared to Moses, revealed God. The symbol chosen for the representation of the Deity was a lowly shrub, that seemingly had no attractions. This enshrined the Infinite. The all-merciful God shrouded His glory in a most humble type, that Moses could look upon it and live. So in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, God communicated with Israel, revealing to men His will, and imparting to them His grace. God's glory was subdued, and His majesty veiled, that the weak vision of finite men might behold it. So Christ was to come in "the body of our humiliation" (Philippians 3:21, R. V.), "in the likeness of men." In the eyes of the world He possessed no beauty that they should desire Him; yet He was the incarnate God, the light of heaven and earth. His glory was veiled, His greatness and majesty were hidden, that He might draw near to

sorrowful, tempted men.” (*Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, pages 22-23, ‘God with us’*)

“With solemn dignity Jesus answered, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I Am.”

Silence fell upon the vast assembly. The name of God, given to Moses to express the idea of the eternal presence, had been claimed as His own by this Galilean Rabbi. He had announced Himself to be the self-existent One, He who had been promised to Israel, “whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity.” Micah 5:2, margin.” (*Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, page 469. ‘The light of life’*)

Two of the previous six quotations from the spirit of prophecy are from the chapter in *The Desire of Ages* called ‘*God with us*’. Here Ellen White describes Christ as the “I am”, “the infinite”, the “all-merciful God” and “the incarnate God”.

Now notice what Ellen White had to say to the youth in her day

“It will baffle the keenest intellect to interpret the divine manifestation of the burning bush. It was not a dream; it was not a vision; it was a living reality,— something that Moses saw with his eyes. He heard the voice of God calling to him out of the bush, and he covered his face, realizing that he stood in the immediate presence of God. God was conversing with humanity. Never could Moses describe the impression made upon his mind by the sight he then saw, and by the sound of the voice that spoke to him; but this impression was never effaced. Heaven came very near to him as, with reverent awe, he listened to the words, “I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” What wondrous condescension for God to leave the heavenly courts, and manifest himself to Moses, talking with him face to face, “as a man speaketh unto his friend. This lesson contains instruction that is profitable for all. Here is revealed a symbol radiant with the glory of Christ, the Great Teacher. The symbol chosen for the representation of the Deity was not a cedar of Lebanon, but a lowly bush, that seemingly had no attractions. This enshrined the Infinite. The all-merciful God shrouded his glory in a most humble type, that Moses might look upon it, and live. God declared: “Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.” All the manifestations of God’s glory have been shrouded, that man might behold it, and not be consumed. Veiled in a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night, God could honor finite man by communicating to him his will, and imparting to him his grace. God’s glory must be subdued, and his majesty veiled, that the weak vision of finite man may look upon it.

This symbol, obscuring the manifestation of God’s glory, foreshadowed Christ’s appearance in our world, his divinity clothed with humanity. Surely in the eyes of the world Christ possessed no beauty that they should desire him, yet he was the incarnate God. This is the mystery of godliness. Human

science, even though it be of the highest order, can not explain it. Men may think that they possess superior qualities, represented by the noble oak, or the stately cedar. Mark the humble birth of Christ, his condescending grace, his infinite humility, the depths to which he descended. He is the eternal Word. Yet he was made flesh, and dwelt among us.

Before Christ came in the likeness of men, he existed in the express image of his Father. He thought it not robbery to be equal with God. Nevertheless he voluntarily emptied himself, and took the form of a servant. **He was the incarnate God**, the light of heaven and earth. In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Yet he was born in a stable, in Bethlehem of Judea. He was the son of Mary, supposed to be the son of Joseph, and he grew up as any other child. His earthly life was one of self-denial and self-sacrifice. "The foxes have holes," he said, "and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." (*Ellen G. White, The Youth's Instructor, December 20th 1900, 'Christ's humiliation'*)

Again Ellen White says that Christ is "the incarnate God". Again she refers to Him as "The all-merciful God". Notice too she says Moses "stood in the immediate presence of God", also that God actually left the heavenly courts to speak with Moses "face to face".

We noted above that since the fall of man, the Father has not spoken directly to humanity. This must mean that the person who appeared to the patriarchs such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses was Christ.

"It was under the trees of Eden that the first dwellers on earth had chosen their sanctuary. **There Christ had communed with the father of mankind. When banished from Paradise, our first parents still worshiped in the fields and groves, and there Christ met them with the gospel of His grace. It was Christ who spoke with Abraham under the oaks at Mamre; with Isaac as he went out to pray in the fields at the eventide; with Jacob on the hillside at Bethel; with Moses among the mountains of Midian; and with the boy David as he watched his flocks.** It was at Christ's direction that for fifteen centuries the Hebrew people had left their homes for one week every year, and had dwelt in booths formed from the green branches "of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook." Leviticus 23:40." (*Ellen G. White, Desire of Ages, page 290, 'He ordained twelve'*)

It must also have been Christ therefore who said to Abram

"I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him..."
Genesis 17:2-3

Notice it says that, “God talked” with Abram. This though was not the Father. It was Christ. This is how the angels in Heaven regard Christ. As Ellen White wrote in 1908

“The crowning glory of Christ’s attributes was his holiness. The angels bow before him in adoration exclaiming, **Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty**. He is declared to be glorious in his holiness.” *(Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, March 12th 1908, ‘Words to teachers and students’)*

As has been said above, God the Father has offered no explanation concerning the oneness of existence between Himself and His Son although in 1905, Ellen White did have this to say about it

“Christ’s divinity is to be steadfastly maintained. When the Saviour asked his disciples the question, “Whom say ye that I am?” Peter answered, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Said Christ, “Upon this rock,” not on Peter, but on the Son of God, “I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Great is the mystery of godliness. There are mysteries in the life of Christ that are to be believed, even though they can not be explained. The finite mind can not fathom the mystery of godliness.” *(Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, 2nd March 1905, ‘A stirring exhortation’)*

There can be no doubting that Ellen White had in mind the words of the apostle Paul when he wrote

“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” 1 Timothy 3:16

The next year this very important statement was made

“There are light and glory in the truth that Christ was one with the Father before the foundation of the world was laid. This is the light shining in a dark place, making it resplendent with divine, original glory. This truth, infinitely mysterious in itself, explains other mysterious and otherwise unexplainable truths, while it is enshrined in light, unapproachable and incomprehensible.” *(Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, 5th April 1906, ‘The Word made flesh’)*

This is why we should not make any attempts to explain this oneness. It is because God has never revealed it. Notice Ellen White says though that it does explain **“other mysterious and otherwise unexplainable truths”**. In other words, the only way to make sense of some things in Scripture is to believe there is a certain oneness between God and His Son that is beyond the understanding of mankind.

The context of where Ellen White made this statement is very important. It will answer many questions. In the same article, in the paragraph immediately

previous to this 'oneness' statement, she made this comment

"The Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, existed from eternity, a distinct person, yet one with the Father. He was the surpassing glory of heaven. He was the commander of the heavenly intelligences, and the adoring homage of the angels was received by him as his right. **This was no robbery of God. "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way," he declares, "before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth; while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth."** (*Ibid*)

The context of Ellen White saying that there is a mysterious and incomprehensible oneness between God and Christ was her saying that Christ was the wisdom of God brought forth (Proverbs 8:22-31). This is telling us something very important. It is explaining Christ's personality. It is speaking of Christ being begotten (being brought forth) of God before anything was created. We spoke of this above. It was indeed 'the beginning of God's way' (see Proverbs 8:22). In other places she wrote saying exactly the same (that Christ is the wisdom of God brought forth)

"Through Solomon Christ declared: "The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, **I was brought forth;** when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills **was I brought forth.** . . . When He gave to the sea His decree, that the waters should not pass His commandment; when He appointed the foundations of the earth; then I was by Him, **as one brought up with Him;** and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him."

In speaking of His pre-existence, Christ carries the mind back through dateless ages. He assures us that there never was a time when He was not in close fellowship with the eternal God. He to whose voice the Jews were then listening had been with God as one brought up with Him." (*Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times, 29th August 1900, 'Resistance to light. No. 3*)

Here we see Ellen White, as she did in a number of other places, saying that Christ was the wisdom of God "brought forth" (as spoken of in Proverbs 8:22-31). She is also saying that Christ assures us that "there never was a time when He was not in close fellowship with the eternal God", also that "He to whose voice the Jews were then listening had been with God as one brought up with Him".

In 1895, in the Signs of the Times, we find these words (after quoting John 8:57-58 which says "Then said the Jews unto Him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and

hast Thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.")

"Here Christ shows them that, altho they might reckon His life to be less than fifty years, yet His divine life could not be reckoned by human computation. The existence of Christ before His incarnation is not measured by figures." (Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, 3rd May 1895, 'The Word made Flesh')

None of us have the right to go beyond what God is telling us here. We cannot say there was a time when Christ 'was not'. This is because God has not spoken such words. How God had His existence prior to Christ being brought forth (begotten) we have not been told. Maybe we would not understand it even if He explained it. We are the finite trying to understand the infinite. We have no right to conjecture about those things God has chosen to keep to Himself.

We can also find other places where Ellen White refers to Christ as the wisdom of Proverbs 8:22-31

"The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old," Christ says. "When He gave to the sea His decree, that the waters should not pass His commandment; when He appointed the foundations of the earth; then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him." But the only-begotten Son of God humbled Himself to come to this earth. He took the sinner's place; the guiltless suffered for the guilty. This was the hiding of His glory. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death." (Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, February 22nd 1899, 'The measure of God's love')

"And the Son of God declares concerning Himself: "The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting.... When He appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him." Proverbs 8:22-30. " (Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 34, 'Why was sin permitted')

"In Christ Jesus is a revelation of the glory of the Godhead. All that the human agent can know of God to the saving of the soul, is the measure of the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, to which he can attain; for Christ is he who represents the Father. The most wonderful truth to be grasped by men is the truth, "Immanuel, God with us." Christ is the wisdom of God. He is the great "I Am" to the world." (Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, 12th December 1895, 'Character of the law revealed in Christ's life', see also *Signs of the Times*, 3rd July 1907)

We noted above that this was when Christ was begotten of God. It was prior to

anything being created (remember that it was through Christ that God created everything). This means that Christ was brought forth from God (God from God). This was the beginning of God's way. This is why Ellen White said that there is a oneness between God and Christ that is beyond human comprehension.

Here are some statements from the spirit of prophecy where Ellen White comments on this oneness. In each statement she quotes where Jesus said to the Jews "I and my Father are one." (John 10:30) They are very interesting.

"Jesus was free from all sin and error; there was not a trace of imperfection in his life or character. He maintained spotless purity under circumstances the most trying. True, he declared, "There is none good but One, that is God," but again he said, "I and my Father are one." Jesus speaks of himself as well as the Father as God, and claims for himself perfect righteousness.

In Christ dwelt the fullness of the God-head bodily." (Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times, October 10th 1892, 'Draw from the source of strength')

"Satan has misrepresented God's purpose, and caused man to look upon Him in a false light; yet thru the ages God's love for man has never ceased. Christ, the divine Teacher, came to reveal the Father as a merciful, compassionate Being, full of goodness and truth. The Saviour swept back the shadow in which the enemy had enveloped the Father, declaring, "I and My Father are one; look on Me and behold God." (Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times, May 1st 1901, 'The divine teacher')

"Charged with his exalted mission, Jesus came into the world as the visible representative of the invisible God. He said to Philip: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? ... From henceforth ye know him and have seen him." "I and my Father are one." What height, and depth, and breadth of meaning in the Saviour's words! They are clothed with a mysterious power that can only be spiritually discerned." (Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times, November 21st 1892, 'Make all things according to the pattern')

"As Christ was speaking His last words of instruction to His disciples, before His crucifixion, Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." Amazed at his dullness of comprehension, Christ asked with pained surprise, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?" The disciples had been Christ's companions for nearly three years; they had listened to His words, witnessed His mighty works, and heard Him say to the Pharisees as He read their thoughts, "I and My Father are one," and He was astonished that they did not yet know Him. If they had not been so slow of comprehension, if they had been more devoted hearers and doers of the Saviour's words, they would not thus have grieved His heart of love by their unbelief.

Philip's doubt called for the utterance of golden truth, which it was essential for the disciples to hear. "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?" Christ asked. "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself; but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me; or else believe Me for the very works' sake." (Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, January 27th 1898, 'Knowing Christ')

This last quote is very interesting. We know that the disciples, as well as the Scribes and the Pharisees, knew Christ to be the Son of God (Matthew 14:33, 16:16 Mark 14:60-65, John 10:36, 19:7) yet Ellen White says here that even though the disciples had been with Him for over 3 years, Christ "was astonished that they did not yet know Him". Was she saying they did not realise that He was God?

Here is another very interesting statement

"Christ was the foundation of the whole system of Jewish worship, and in it was shadowed forth the living reality,--the manifestation of God in Christ. Through the sacrificial system men could see Christ's personality and look forward to their divine Saviour. But when he stood before them, representing the invisible God,--for in him dwelt "all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,--they were not able to discern his divine character because of their want of spirituality. Their own prophets had foretold him as a Deliverer. Isaiah had declared: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever." But though his character and mission had been so plainly delineated, though he came unto his own, his own received him not. Occasionally divinity flashed through humanity, the glory escaped through the disguise of the flesh, and brought forth an expression of homage from his disciples. But it was not until Christ ascended to his Father, not until the descent of the Holy Spirit, that the disciples fully appreciated the character and the mission of Christ. After the baptism of the Holy Spirit they began to realize that they had been in the very presence of the Lord of life and glory. ... They realized that "the Word was made 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," (Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, 23rd April 1895, 'Christ, The Light of the World, Uncomprehended')

Take special note of these final comments of Ellen White. The words she wrote (from John chapter 1) would not be written until 60 years after the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Remember though, Jesus did say to His disciples

"I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the

world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. **At that day ye shall know** that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.”
John 14:18-20

Who did the disciples at Pentecost realise had been with them? Who was this “Lord of life and glory”? The Scriptures tell us

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

Ellen White comments

“O, what a history we have in the life and death, resurrection and exaltation of Christ! **He was the incarnate God, the Lord of life and glory**; yet for our sakes he was delivered into the hands of wicked men:” (*Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times, May 30th 1895, ‘Christ our complete salvation’*)

In a sermon of November 1908, Ellen White is recorded to have made this observation (she was commenting on John 15 verses 1-23)

“Verse 11. And if Christ’s joy remains in us that which rejoiced His heart is upon us, that your joy might be full. It is a living connection with the living, tenderhearted God. **Jesus Christ is our heavenly Father. Jesus Christ is the Father with us. God is the Father, and there is the link of the chain brought right down to bind His children in connection with the Father.**” (*Ellen G. White, Ms 141, 1908, Sermon, November 15th 1908, Healdsburg, California, ‘Lessons from John 15’*)

We have already seen the following statement but it is well worth considering again.

“The world’s Redeemer was equal with God. His authority was as the authority of God. **He declared that he had no existence separate from the Father.** The authority by which he spoke, and wrought miracles, was expressly his own, **yet he assures us that he and the Father are one.**” (*Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, January 7th 1890, ‘Christ revealed the Father’*)

Note well it says that Christ had “no existence separate from the Father”. This again speaks of the oneness between God and Christ. It is also I keeping with the belief that Christ is begotten of God. Continuing on with the oneness statements

“We need not look at the shadows that Satan casts on our path. He would eclipse heaven and Jesus and the light and power of heaven to us, and we keep talking of the power of Satan. But we need not talk of that. Isaiah presents it this way: **“Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”** Isaiah 9:6. Does not that say that I and My Father are one?”

(Ellen G. White, Ms 1 1889, sermon, Ottawa, Kansas, May 11th 1889, 'The quality of our faith')

The latter question is very relevant to our study. Continuing with the “I and my Father are one” statements

“But the Pharisees could not conceal their anger. As though filled with holy horror, they began to reason, saying, “Who is this which speaketh blasphemies, Who can forgive sins but God alone?” But it was the Son of the living God who had uttered the words, “Thy sins be forgiven thee.” **Had not the Pharisees been blinded by prejudice, they would have seen that He who was before them was the Christ, and that He was in the Father, and the Father in Him. “I and My Father are one,” He declared.**” *(Ellen G. White, Present Truth, May 25th 1899, 'Christ's Mission)*

“While Christ stood forth as the Son of man, **in His own personality, He was at the same time one with the Deity.** He stood within the light surrounding the throne of God, and His words were spoken with power and authority. “The Father is in Me, and I in Him,” He declared. “No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.” “Whatsoever the Father doeth, that also doeth the Son likewise.” **“I and My Father are one.” “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.” Christ and God are one, and yet they are distinct personalities.**” *(Ellen White, Ms 140 1903, 'Christ's work' September 27th 1903)*

“But the anger and the frowning countenances of the Pharisees could not be concealed. Apparently their looks expressed holy horror. They began to reason, saying, **“Who is this which speaketh blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?”** But who was it that had uttered the words, “Thy sins are forgiven thee”? The Son of the living God. **Had the Pharisees not been blinded, they would have seen that God alone could forgive sins, and that He was the Christ that was before them. Christ was in the Father, and the Father in Christ. “I and my Father are one,” He declared.**” *(Ellen G. White, Ms 36 1898, 'Christ's mission, March 10th 1898)*

“Said Christ, “All things that the Father hath are mine.” [John 16:15.] **“I and My Father are one.** I appoint unto you a kingdom.” [John 10:30; Luke 22:29.] The Lord Jesus lays His hand upon the eternal throne of God with all the ease and assurance of one who rules and reigns, **putting on His head the crown of Deity.** He sits at the right hand of God and receives supreme honor as God, the glory He had before the world was. He distributes His gifts to all who by faith shall claim them.” *(Ellen G. White, Letter 83, 1895, to James Edson White, November 18th 1895)*

“With what firmness and power he uttered these words. The Jews had never before heard such words from human lips, and a convicting influence attended them; for it seemed that divinity flashed through humanity as Jesus

said, "I and my Father are one." The words of Christ were full of deep meaning as he put forth the claim that he and the Father were of one substance, possessing the same attributes. The Jews understood his meaning, there was no reason why they should misunderstand, and they took up stones to stone him. Jesus looked upon them calmly and unshrinkingly, and said, "Many good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of these works do ye stone me?.... Had the Pharisees misunderstood his words, he could and would have corrected their wrong impression. He could have told them that he was no blasphemer, although he had called himself the Son of God, and that his words need not necessarily mean that he had invested himself with divine prerogatives, and made himself equal with the Father. But he made no such statement. The impression they had received was the very impression he desired to make." (Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, November 27th 1893, 'The true sheep respond to the voice of the shepherd')

"Jesus said, "I and my Father are one." He speaks of Himself as well as the Father when He speaks of omnipotent power, and claims for Himself perfect righteousness. In Christ dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily." (Ellen G. White, *Bible Echo*, November 1st 1892, 'Tempted in all points like as we are')

From all that we have read above, we can only conclude that Christ is truly the Son of God, begotten of God in eternity. It follows therefore that He is God Himself, in the person of the Son. Note these statements

"God gave Himself to save man. Christ, the dearly beloved Son of God, one with the Father, died for us, thus expressing the love of God for sinful man. (Ellen G. White, *Ms 58 1900*, typed August 14th 1900, 'The law and the Gospel')

"Christ himself was the Word, the Wisdom, of God; and in him God himself came down from heaven, and clothed himself in the habiliments of humanity." (Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, 1st February 1898, 'The Plan of Redemption')

"God gave Himself, withholding nothing, to save perishing souls. And God calls for workers who will share a part in this self-denial." (Ellen G. White,, *Letter 109 1900*, to G. A. Irwin, June 27th 1900)

"In giving His Son, God gave Himself that man might have another trial. If God could have changed this law to meet man in his fallen condition, would He not have done this, and retained His only begotten Son in heaven?—He certainly would." (Ellen G. White, *Bible Echo*, February 8th 1897, *The Law and the Gospel*)

"The most powerful motives and attractions that can be imagined are offered to reclaim man, and win him from the path of transgression to the path of

humble obedience. “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall he not with Him also freely give us all things?” No stronger inducement could be offered. Nothing is withheld. **In Christ God gave Himself.** He has enriched the world with a gift beyond all parallel.” (Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, January 20th 1898, *The way, the Truth, and the Life*)

There is one final quote from the spirit of prophecy upon which I would like to comment but before I do so I would bring this Scripture to mind

“John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood” Revelation 1:4-5

Not too many people would argue that here we see two persons. The first is referred to as “him which is, and which was, and which is to come” (which most would regard as the Father) whilst the second is “Jesus Christ”. Look though at this comment from the spirit of prophecy

“What a Saviour we have! **It was he that revealed himself to John on the Isle of Patmos, and proclaimed, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.”** None but just such an ever-living, mighty God, could pay the ransom to save sinners from going down into the pit of death.” (Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald February 18, 1896 ‘Sanctified humility*)

Who is this “Saviour”? Who is this “ever-living, mighty God”? Who is it that paid “the ransom” to save sinners? Was it God or was it Christ? I will leave you to reason that one through for yourself.

Much more could be commented upon from the spirit of prophecy saying that Christ is God but it would be too much to do so here. Instead I am just going to leave you with the following quotations. This will be without comment from me. I am sure you will have no difficulty in drawing the conclusion that Christ is indeed God in the person of the Son. They also speak of the mysterious oneness between God the Father and Christ. God bless you as you read them.

Additional statements from the spirit of prophecy

“**The one great object of the care and guardianship of Christ was the church in the wilderness. He said of Israel: “I am the Lord thy God”, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour;** I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honorable, and I have loved thee; therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.” (Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, April 2nd 1894, *‘Look and Live*)



“When trouble comes upon us, how often we are like Peter! We look upon the waves, instead of keeping our eyes fixed upon the Saviour. Our footsteps slide, and the proud waters go over our souls. Jesus did not bid Peter come to Him that he should perish; He does not call us to follow Him, and then forsake us. “Fear not,” He says; “for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. **For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour.**” Isaiah 43:1-3. “ (Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages*, page 382, ‘A night on the lake’)



“As John, exiled upon the Isle of Patmos, was startled from his contemplation of [the works of] God in nature and as on bended knees he was praying to Him, he hears a voice, saying, “**I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last**” [Revelation 1:11.] At the sound of the voice, John falls down in astonishment as if dead. He is unable to bear the sight of the divine glory. **But a Hand raises John up, and the voice he remembers as the voice of his Master. He is strengthened and can endure to talk with the Lord Jesus.**” (Ellen G. White, *Ms 56 1886*, ‘Traveling in Switzerland, May 20th 1886’)



“The types and rites of the Jewish church were all connected with himself [Christ]; he was the glory of the whole system. Everything that was attractive, either in nature or revelation, was found in him; he was the all-absorbing theme of patriarchs and prophets, - **the first and the last, the Alpha and the Omega of all things.**” (Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, October 14th 1890, ‘The Object of Christ’s Teaching’)



“Christ says, “I am the true witness.” **“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last”** “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.” (Ellen G. White, *Ms 10 1894*, Sermon, Williamstown, Australia February 11th 1894), ‘Keep the Commandments’)



“The King of kings descends upon the cloud, wrapped in flaming fire. The heavens are rolled together as a scroll, the earth trembles before Him, and every mountain and island is moved out of its place. **“Our God shall come, and**

shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people.” (Ellen G. White, *Great Controversy*, page 641, ‘God’s people delivered’)

<><><>

“When the divine Presence was manifested upon Sinai, the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire in the sight of all Israel. But when Christ shall come in glory with His holy angels the whole earth shall be ablaze with the terrible light of His presence. “Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him.” {Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 339, ‘Satan’s enmity against the Law’}

<><><>

“When Christ shall come, the earth will tremble before him, and the heavens will be rolled together as a scroll, and every mountain and every island will be moved out of its place. “Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.” {Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, June 20, 1895, ‘Purifieth Himself’}

<><><>

“The coming of Christ to usher in the reign of righteousness has inspired the most sublime and impassioned utterances of the sacred writers. The poets and prophets of the Bible have dwelt upon it in words glowing with celestial fire. The psalmist sang of the power and majesty of Israel’s King: “Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined. Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence.” (Ellen G. White, *Great Controversy*, page 300, ‘Heralds of the morning’)

<><><>

“In the grand counsels of Heaven it was found that it was positively necessary that there should be a revelation of God to man in the person of his only begotten Son. He came to earth to be “the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” (Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, 26th November 1895, ‘An appeal for the Southern Field’)

<><><>

“For centuries the Jews had vainly endeavored to show wherein the promise of God, given by Haggai, had been fulfilled; yet pride and unbelief blinded their minds to the true meaning of the prophet’s words. The second temple was not honored with the cloud of Jehovah’s glory, but with the living presence of One in whom dwelt the fullness of the Godhead bodily,—who

was God himself manifest in the flesh.” (Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy Volume 4 page 24, ‘Destruction of Jerusalem’*)

<><><>

“Jesus Christ “counted it not a thing to be grasped to be equal with God.” Because divinity alone could be efficacious in the restoration of man from the poisonous bruise of the serpent, God himself, in his only begotten Son, assumed human nature, and in the weakness of human nature sustained the character of God, vindicated his holy law in every particular, and accepted the sentence of wrath and death for the sons of men.” (Ellen G. White, *Youth’s Instructor, February 11th 1897, ‘The Mind of Christ’*)

<><><>

“As the representative of God, Christ appeared in human flesh. Though in the form of a man, He was the Son of God, and the world was given an opportunity to see how it would treat God. Christ declared, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” But when He comes the second time, divinity is no longer concealed. He comes as one equal with God, as His own beloved Son, Prince of heaven and earth. He is also the Redeemer of His people, the Lifegiver. The glory of the Father and the Son are seen to be one. His claim to being one with the Father is now substantiated. His glory is the glory of the Son, and the glory of God. Then shall He shine forth before His ancients gloriously.” (Ellen G. White, *Letter 90 1898, to J. H. Kellogg*)

<><><>

“What a love it is that appeals to fallen men! "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." God showed his love for us by adopting our nature, in the person of his Son. God himself inhabited humanity, making us partakers of the divine nature, that by the incarnation and death of his only begotten Son, our adoption as heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ might be fully accomplished. The origin of this wonderful achievement was his own spontaneous love.” (Ellen G. White, *Youth’s Instructor, 16th December 1897, ‘The New Commandment, Part 1’*)

<><><>

“Christ, the loved Commander in the heavenly courts, stooped from His high estate, laid aside the glory that He had with the Father, in order to save the one lost world. For this He left the sinless worlds on high, the ninety and nine that loved Him, and came to this earth, to be “wounded for our transgressions” and “bruised for our iniquities.” (Isaiah 53:5.) God gave Himself in His Son that He might have the joy of receiving back the sheep that was lost.” (Ellen G White, *Christ’s Object Lessons’ page 190, ‘This man receiveth sinners’*)

<><><>

“**God in His Son** had been seeking fruit, and had found none. Israel was a cumberer of the ground. Its very existence was a curse; for it filled the place in the vineyard that a fruitful tree might fill. It robbed the world of the blessings that God designed to give.” *(Ellen G White, Christ's Object Lessons' page 215, 'Spare it this year also')*

<><><>

“**In His Son God gave Himself** to save from eternal ruin all who would believe in Him.” *(Ellen G. White, Ms 145, December 30, 1897)*

<><><>

“That this redemption might be ours, **God withheld not even the sacrifice of Himself. He gave Himself in His Son. The Father suffered with Christ in all His humiliation and agony....**The human heart knows the love of a parent for his child. We know what a mother's love will do and suffer for her beloved one. But never can the heart of man fathom the depths of **God's self-sacrifice.**” *(Ellen G White, Australasian Union Conference Record, 1st June 1900, 'The love of God. How manifested')*

<><><>

“God has measured how much it cost to save man. **This salvation was accomplished only by the sacrifice of Himself in His Son.** "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."... **Exalt the God of heaven, you who can realize the depth of His self-sacrifice; for He suffered with His Son.**” *(Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times, 27th January 1898, 'Knowing Christ')*

<><><>

“The law of God could not be set aside even to save lost man. The well-being of the universe demanded that the divine government should be maintained. But in His infinite love and mercy, **the Creator sacrificed Himself. In His Son, God Himself bore the penalty of transgression,** "that He might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." *(Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times, 4th November 1908, 'The plan of redemption')*

<><><>

“But in order to save the sinner, **the Creator sacrificed Himself. The Father suffered in His Son.** The measure of God's love is Christ. The Saviour's sacrifice was not to create in God a love that had not before existed; but it was the expression of a love that had not been appreciated or understood.” *(Ellen G. White, Bible Training School, 1st February 1908, 'Christ and the*

law')

<><><>

"In the person of his only begotten Son, the God of heaven has condescended to stoop to our human nature." (Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, 8th November 1898, 'The revelation of God', see also *Review and Herald*, 17th March 1904)

<><><>

"Jesus declared that the pure in heart should see God. They would recognize him in the person of his Son, who was sent to the world for the salvation of the human race. Their minds, being cleansed and occupied with pure thoughts, would more clearly discover the Creator in the works of his mighty hand, in the things of beauty and magnificence which comprise the universe. They would live as in the visible presence of the Almighty, in a world of his creation, during the time that he apportions them here. They would also see God in the future immortal state, as did Adam when he walked and talked with God in Eden. Even now the pure in heart see God "through a glass darkly, but then face to face." (Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy Volume 2*, page 208, 'Sermon on the Mount')

<><><>

"Christ invites us to draw near to him, and promises that he will draw nigh to us. Looking upon him, we behold the invisible God, who clothed his divinity with humanity in order that through humanity he might shed forth a subdued and softened glory, so that our eyes might be enabled to rest upon him, and our souls not be extinguished by his undimmed splendor. We behold God through Christ, our Creator and Redeemer." (Ellen G. White, *Youth's Instructor*, 28th October 1897 'Have You the Wedding Garment? Part II')

<><><>

"To human eyes, Christ was only a man, yet he was a perfect man. In his humanity he was the impersonation of the divine character. God embodied his own attributes in his Son,--his power, his wisdom, his goodness, his purity, his truthfulness, his spirituality, and his benevolence. In him, though human, all perfection of character, all divine excellence, dwelt. And to the request of his disciple, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," he could reply, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?" "I and my Father are one." (Ellen G. White, *Youth's Instructor*, 16th September 1897, 'What think ye of Christ')

<><><>

“Jesus sought to draw their minds away from himself personally, to the importance of his position as the heir of all things, an equal with God Himself; that through suffering and conflict he had gained his great inheritance, the kingdoms of Heaven and of earth. He wished them to understand at once how ample was his authority, and, as one above all powers and principalities, he issued the great commission to his chosen disciples.” (Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy Volume 3*, page 236, ‘Meeting of the brethren’)

<><><>

“Look, O look to Jesus and live. You can but be charmed with the matchless attractions of the Son of God. Christ was God manifest in the flesh, the mystery hidden for ages, and in our acceptance or rejection of the Saviour of the world are involved eternal interests. ... This love is past all language to describe. It is the mystery of God in the flesh, God in Christ, and divinity in humanity.” (Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, 17th November 1891, ‘The Teacher of Truth the Only Safe Educator’)

<><><>

“Christ was God manifest in the flesh; in him dwelt “all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” All this glory he longed to pour upon the world, but men refused to receive it. They were given evidence upon evidence; but they bound themselves up in their stubborn unbelief and prejudice. Therefore they were without excuse.” (Ellen G. White, *The Youth’s Instructor*, March 21st 1901, ‘Show us a sign from Heaven’)

<><><>

“The divine nature of Christ was not transformed into human nature, but the divine and human were united. Christ was God in the flesh; in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily to act out the principles that govern all heaven.” (Ellen G. White, *Diary*, July 4th 1891, Ms 43b 1891, ‘Creation and the Sabbath’)

<><><>

“But who that is not infinite can understand the infinite? Christ declares, “No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son shall reveal him.” It is recorded of Epictetus that when his hearers said to him, “You have uttered many excellent things of God; but we cannot as yet understand what he is,” he truly and nobly replied, “Were I able fully to set forth God, I should either be a god myself, or God himself would cease to be what he is.” The greatness of God cannot be measured or comprehended. And that doctrine that denies the absolute Godhead of Jesus Christ, denies also the Godhead of the Father; for no man knoweth the Son but the Father.” (Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, June 27th 1895, ‘Christ object

in coming to the world')

<><><>

“God gave His Son as a sacrifice to save the human family, that they might live—not the life of Satan, but the life of Christ; for in Christ the divine nature was united with human nature. **The Word, who “was in the beginning with God,” “was made flesh and dwelt among us.” Christ was God manifest in the flesh.** “Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” (*Ellen G. White, Ms 41 1902, ‘The location of the sanitarium in California’*)

<><><>

And “when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son.” ...The heavenly Teacher had come. Who was He? No less a being than the Son of God Himself. **He appeared as God**, and at the same time as the Elder Brother of the human race.” (*Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times, May 17, 1905, ‘A teacher sent from God’*)

<><><>

“I am the light of the world,” Christ declared. When Moses saw the burning bush in Mount Horeb, and turned aside to see why the bush was not consumed, **Christ revealed Himself to Moses** and told him what he must do to deliver the children of Israel from Egypt. When Moses asked what he should say to the children of Israel, when they asked him by what authority he called them out of Egypt, **God said, “Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I Am hath sent me unto you.”** (*Ellen G. White, Letter 38 1907, to Russell Hart 4th February 1907*)

<><><>

“Through the eternal ages He is linked with us. “God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son.” John 3:16. He gave Him not only to bear our sins, and to die as our sacrifice; He gave Him to the fallen race. To assure us of His immutable counsel of peace, God gave His only-begotten Son to become one of the human family, forever to retain His human nature. This is the pledge that God will fulfill His word. “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder.” **God has adopted human nature in the person of His Son, and has carried the same into the highest heaven.** It is the “Son of man” who shares the throne of the universe. **It is the “Son of man” whose name shall be called, “Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”** Isaiah 9:6. **The I AM is the Daysman between God and humanity, laying His hand upon both.”** (*Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, page 25, ‘God with us’*)

<><><>

“It was the power of God, and no human influence or power possessed by Moses, that produced those miracles wrought before Pharaoh. Those signs and wonders were designed to convince Pharaoh that **the great "I AM" had sent Moses**, and that it was the duty of the king to let Israel go that they might serve the living God.” (*Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times, 6th November 1884 'Science so falsely called'*)

<><><>

“The Pharisees were horrified at this declaration of Christ's, “Before Abraham was, I am.” They were beside themselves with rage that He should express such awful blasphemy, claiming to be the I AM. They would have stoned Him then and there, **but the I AM blinded their eyes that they should not see Him**, although He went out of the temple, passing through the very midst of them. As Jesus passed through the multitude He saw a man who had been blind from his birth, and healed him.” (*Ellen G. White, Letter 119 1895, to James Edson White and Emma White*)

<><><>

“The truth of the third angel's message has been proclaimed by some as a dry theory. But we must all place in that message Christ, as the first and the last, **the I AM, the bright and morning star**. The message must be given, “Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.” The second coming of Christ is near, even at the door. Who are prepared to look upon the bright and morning star? who are ready to glorify God? Who will bring the bright and morning star of hope, of mercy, of forgiveness, and of peace into their hearts, and proclaim the last message of mercy to be given to the world? “O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; **say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God.**”” (*Ellen G. White, Ms 36, 1897, April 1st 1897, 'In Gethsemane', see also Testimonies Volume 6 page 20*)

<><><>

“All night long he [Jacob] had been wrestling with One whom he supposed was his enemy; **but it was the great I AM, the mighty God, the Prince of peace**; and just as long as he continued his wrestling, he found no comfort, no hope. It was a life-and-death question with him, and his strength was almost exhausted. Then the Angel touched his thigh, and he knew that he wrestled with no common adversary. Wounded and helpless, Jacob fell upon his bosom, just as you and I must do, just as any soul does when he falls upon the Rock and is broken. “Let me go for the day breaketh,” pleaded the angel; **but Jacob ceased not his intercession, and Christ had to make terms with this helpless, broken, penitent soul, in accordance with his own character:**” (*Ellen G. White, Bible Echo, February 15, 1892, 'Ye are*

complete in Him')

<><><>

“Jesus Christ laid off His royal robe, His kingly crown, and clothed His divinity with humanity, in order to become a substitute and surety for humanity, that dying in humanity He might by His death destroy him who had the power of death. **He could not have done this as God**, but by coming as man, Christ could die.” (*Ellen G. White, Letter 97, 1898, p. 5. To "My Brethren in North Fitzroy," November 18, 1898*)

<><><>

“The more we think about Christ’s becoming a babe here on earth, the more wonderful it appears. **How can it be that the helpless babe in Bethlehem’s manger is still the divine Son of God?** Though we cannot understand it, we can believe that he who made the worlds, for our sakes became a helpless babe. **Though higher than any of the angels, though as great as the Father on the throne of heaven, he became one with us. In him God and man became one, and it is in this fact that we find the hope of our fallen race. Looking upon Christ in the flesh, we look upon God in humanity, and see in him the brightness of divine glory, the express image of God the Father.**” (*Ellen G. White, Youth’s Instructor, 21st November 1895, 'Child life of Jesus No. 1'*)

<><><>

“What opposites meet and are revealed in the person of Christ! The mighty God, yet a helpless child! The Creator of all the world, yet, in a world of His creating, often hungry and weary, and without a place to lay His head! The Son of Man, yet infinitely higher than the angels! Equal with the Father, yet His divinity clothed with humanity, standing at the head of the fallen race, that human beings might be placed on vantage-ground! Possessing eternal riches, yet living the life of a poor man! One with the Father in dignity and power, yet in His humanity tempted in all points like as we are tempted! In the very moment of His dying agony on the cross, a Conqueror, answering the request of the repentant sinner to be remembered by Him when He came into His kingdom, with the words, "Verily I say unto thee to-day, Thou shalt be with Me in Paradise."

Christ was God manifest in the flesh. In Him divinity and humanity were united. In Him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” (*Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times, 26th April 1905, God manifest in the flesh*)

<><><>

“Since Jesus came to dwell with us, **we know that God is acquainted with our trials, and sympathizes with our griefs.** Every son and daughter of Adam

may understand that our Creator is the friend of sinners. For in every doctrine of grace, every promise of joy, every deed of love, every divine attraction presented in the Saviour's life on earth, **we see "God with us."** (Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages* page 24, 'God with us')

<><><>

"No one, looking upon the childlike countenance, shining with animation, could say that Christ was just like other children. **He was God in human flesh.**" (Ellen G. White, *Youth's Instructor*, 8th September 1898)

<><><>

"O, what a history we have in the life and death, resurrection and exaltation of Christ! **He was the incarnate God**, the Lord of life and glory; yet for our sakes he was delivered into the hands of wicked men. ... When the mighty angel descended from heaven, parting the darkness from his track, the Roman guard fell as dead men before the resplendent glory, **and Christ in his Godhead** shone forth as he burst from the tomb, and rose triumphant over death and the grave. The disciples understood, when they saw him arisen from the dead, what he meant when he said, **"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."** (Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, May 30th 1895, 'Christ our complete salvation')

<><><>

"We should prostrate the soul before the incarnate God. We are not to trust in fables, and worship places that God has cursed, and foster idolatry in so doing. Jesus said to the Samaritan woman: "Ye worship ye know not what; we know what we worship; for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, February 25th 1896, 'Higher Education')

<><><>

"Satan is an accuser, a thief, and a murderer. He instigated men, not only to put to death innocent human beings, **but the incarnate God.** If he could, he would have held Christ locked in the tomb." (Ellen G. White, *MS 111*, 1897 'Our substitute and surety')

<><><>

"For this Christ came into our world. This was the object ever before Him, to seek and to save that which was lost. He gave His life that man, **through the offering of Himself, the incarnate God**, through faith in Him, might secure that life that measures with the life of God. He has the care of every soul in

view." (Ellen G. White, Letter 72, 1897, to Bro and Sister Haskell, December 1st 1897)

<><><>

"Gideon desired some token that the one now addressing him was the same that spoke to Moses in the burning bush. The angel had veiled the divine glory of his presence, but it was no other than Christ, the Son of God. When a prophet or an angel delivered a divine message, his words were, "The Lord saith, I will do this," but it is stated of the Person who talked with Gideon, "The Lord said unto him, I will be with thee." (Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times, 23^d June 1881, 'Gideon called')

<><><>

"The humanity of the Son of God is everything to us. It is the golden chain that binds our souls to Christ, and through Christ to God. This is to be our study. Christ was a real man; he gave proof of his humility in becoming a man. Yet he was God in the flesh." (Ellen G. White, Youth's Instructor, 13th October 1898, 'Search the Scriptures No. 1')

<><><>

"The burning bush, in which God appeared to Moses, revealed Christ. There is living truth in this spectacle. In mercy God was about to deliver his people from Egyptian bondage; and he appeared to Moses, telling him that he had been selected as the visible leader of God's people. Moses was chosen by the Lord as his representative to bear a message to Pharaoh. He must receive his commands directly from God: a most important responsibility had been placed upon him." (Ellen G. White, Youth's Instructor, 13th December 1900, 'The burning bush')

<><><>

"Jesus was the invisible leader of his ancient people, and every command and direction given to the people through Moses, was the command and direction of Jesus Christ. Jesus in the New Testament does the same work as Jesus in the Old Testament did; but men are so determined to do away with the law of God, in order that they may find a way of avoiding the observance of the Sabbath, that they array Jesus in the New Testament against Jesus in the Old Testament." (Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times, October 2nd 1893, 'My people have committed two evils')

Copyright acknowledgements

- NIV - New International Version, The Holy Bible, New International Versions NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission of Biblica, Inc.® All rights reserved worldwide.
- RSV - Revised Standard Version. The Bible text designated RSV is from The Holy Bible: Revised Standard Version. Copyright 1946, 1952, 1959, 1973 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. All rights reserved. Used by permission.
- NASB – *New American Standard Version* Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995; Audio Recording Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, (P) 1989 by The Lockman Foundation, La Habra, Calif. All rights reserved. Used by permission. For usage information, please read the [NASB Copyright Statement](#).
- ESV -English Standard Version Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of [Good News Publishers](#). Used by permission. All rights reserved.
- [Holman Christian Standard](#) Scripture quotations marked HCSB are been taken from the Holman Christian Standard Bible, Copyright © 1999, 2000, 2002, 2003 by Holman Bible Publishers. Used by permission. Holman Christian Standard Bible, Holman CSB®, and HCSB® are federally registered trademarks of Holman Bible Publishers.
- Rotherham Bible [The Emphasised Bible](#) The Bible text designated "The Emphasized Bible" is from The Emphasized Bible by J.B. Rotherham, originally published by Samuel Bagster and Sons in 1902. The electronic text is copyright 2000 by Larry Nelson, Box 2083, Rialto, CA 92376. All rights reserved. Used by permission.
- J. B. Phillips translation The New Testament in Modern English by J.B Phillips copyright © 1960, 1972. Administered by The Archbishops' Council of the Church of England. Used by Permission.
- COMPLETE JEWISH BIBLE, copyright© 1998 by David H. Stern. Published by Jewish New Testament Publications, Inc. www.messianicjewish.net/jntp. Distributed by Messianic Jewish Resources Int'l. www.messianicjewish.net. All rights reserved. Used by permission. .
- New Century Version Scripture taken from the New Century Version®. Copyright © 2005 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.