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DID GOD HAVE A SON TO GIVE?

David Clayton



One of the most popular avenues taken by those who deny that Jesus is the true, literal son of God, is to claim that Jesus was not the Son of God until he was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of Mary, or until He was resurrected after His crucifixion (Rom. 1:4).

Does this claim bear the test of close investigation? Is this conclusion a reasonable one in light of all the facts? Jesus, as well as the entire New Testament reveals that God's love was supremely manifested when He gave His "only begotten Son" for men. (John 3: 16; 1 John 4: 10). Let us pause to think about this. God wants men to appreciate how much He loves them. His whole purpose from the beginning of the world has been to reveal the degree of His love for mankind. When He finally unveiled the fullness of His love in all its splendor for the universe to see, it was in the act of sending someone to earth to die for men. In this action of sending this person, God revealed His love in a way that it had never been seen before and would never again be equaled in all eternity.

TWO VITAL QUESTIONS

There are two vital questions which we need to ask ourselves. The first one is, who was this person that God sent? This question is critical because if the sending of this person is the key factor in the revelation of God's love, then it must be clear that the key question is, "What was the relationship between this person and God?"

Let me illustrate my point. If John 3:16 had read, "God so loved the world that He gave an angel whom He created...." or, "God so loved the world that He gave His friend...." Would the action really have impressed us with the fact that God's love for us is very great? Men would have understood if God had claimed to have given an angel. We would have comprehended it if God had claimed to have given His friend. But would this really have revealed God's love for man? The plain fact is, God's consistent testimony is that He gave His SON. In the very words of that Son, "His only begotten Son." How great is God's love for us? The answer to that question pivots around the issue of who Jesus really was. Only as we can discern the true identity of Christ can we appreciate the enormity of the sacrifice which God made for man, and therefore the magnitude of His love for us.

A relevant question is, "why does the Bible call Jesus the "Son of God." Is this term one that was coined by the gospel writers, was it a figurative term, was it a title like the term "prophet (as some have suggested)?" The plain fact of the matter is that God Himself in the presence of a multitude of people proclaimed, "This is my beloved Son (Matt. 3:17)." Again, Jesus Himself over and over declared that He was the SON of God, and more than that, the "only begotten Son of God." (John 3:16) The testimony of these two Beings none dare contradict, or ascribe to tradition or custom or misunderstanding. Surely, God knew the identity of Jesus and Jesus Himself must have known His own identity. Let us then make note of the fact that in seeking to convey to human minds the relationship between God and Jesus, both Jesus and God have used the word "Son" and "Father". Any human being therefore is guilty of the greatest presumption if he concludes that Jesus is anyone other than the *SON* of God.

Did God merely use human terminology when He referred to Jesus as His "beloved Son," so that we could understand how

He feels about Jesus? Was this an attempt on the part of God to mislead us, or to enlighten us? Does God want us to believe something is so, even though it isn't? If God wanted us to think of Jesus as His Son, why should we think of Him as being God Himself? Are we wiser than God? When God says, "this is my beloved Son," how can we be so presumptuous as to say, "He was not really God's Son. He was God Himself!!" Let us be certain of this: God has given us the information which we **need** and what He tells us is what He expects us to **believe** and to **receive**. Furthermore, the only safety in this world lies in believing and receiving that word.

The second vital question which we must ask is, when did Jesus become the Son of God? This question is a critical one because God's love for us is revealed in the gift of His Son. Yet, God could not have loved Christ as a Son until He became His Son. Does this sound logical? God's love for His Son must be measured from the time when He had a Son. If Jesus had existed before He became God's Son, then God may have loved Him as a brother, as a friend, may even have been said to love Himself, if as some say, Jesus was God Himself. However, He could not have loved Him as His *SON* until He became His Son.

When did Jesus become the Son of God? Strenuous efforts have been made to prove that God never had a Son before Jesus came to earth. Such efforts have come from all quarters, but all of them fail in the light of the plain simple word of God. Was there a

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Open Face is dedicated to the promotion of the truths committed to the Advent movement, as believed and taught by the early Adventist pioneers. In particular to the restoration of those truths which have been cast down to the ground and trampled underfoot by the papacy, and adopted by her daughters.

Our purpose is to motivate our readers to commit themselves wholly to the task of personal preparation for the coming of the Lord, and to the taking of the final warning message to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

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David Clayton: Editor & Publisher
P.O. Box 23, Knockpatrick
Manchester, Jamaica W.I.
Phone: (876) 904-7392
email: david000@cwjamaica.com
Website: <http://www.restorationministry.com>

time when God said, "Son, you may go?" 1 John 4:9 says that God sent His only begotten Son *into* the world. When did this happen? Was it before Jesus came into the world or was it after He came into the world? Did God first send Jesus into the world and then after His arrival here, say, "Son, you may go into the world?" These questions may seem ridiculous but they need to be asked in order that it may become clear how unreasonable is the position that Jesus never became God's Son until after He had come into the world. Basic logic should tell us that if God sent His Son into the world (John 3:17; 1 John 4:9) then He must have had a Son to send (Mark 12:6). He did not send Himself to become His Son, He did not send His friend to become His Son, He did not send a part of Himself to become His Son. At the moment when Jesus was sent, He was already the Son of God.

To believe that Jesus was not God's Son until He was conceived in Mary's womb would present the ridiculous idea that Jesus arrived before He was sent. Or that God sent His Son before He had a Son.

It is painful to see Christian men and women twisting the word of God in an attempt to obscure and destroy this simple truth which is so plainly taught in the Bible. It is particularly distressing to find people who love to quote the writings of Ellen White when it suits them, totally ignoring and outrightly contradicting the plainest statements of E.G. White when it

comes to this issue. There are several issues on which Ellen White's statements seem to be ambiguous and on which it may be difficult to arrive at a settled understanding of what exactly was her position. However, on the question of Jesus' identity before He came to earth, there is no mistaking the teachings of Ellen White.

"Before the foundations of the world were laid, Christ, the Only Begotten of God, pledged Himself to become the Redeemer of the human race, should Adam sin. ...

"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" (Luke 1:35). While the Son of a human being, He became the Son of God in a new sense. Thus He stood in our world—the Son of God, yet allied by birth to the human race." (ISM, PG- 226, 227)

"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. (Advent Review and Sabbath Herald - 07-09-95)

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. (The Signs of the Times - 05-30-95)

TESTIMONY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Though the testimony of the Old Testament is not as clear as that of the New, there are several verses in the Old Testament which clearly reveal the truth that God had a Son long before Jesus ever came to the earth.

"Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the

earth? what is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?" (Prov 30:4)

Which two beings was this verse speaking of? One of them is clearly the Creator of all things the one who "bound the waters in a garment" and "established all the ends of the earth." However, there is another person mentioned. Here long before Christ was born in Bethlehem the question is asked, "what is His Son's name?" If

In His incarnation He gained in a new sense the title of the Son of God.

God did not have a Son at that time what is the meaning of the question?

Again when we look at Proverbs 8:22-31 it is difficult for us to misunderstand the meaning of the passage. Of whom is this passage speaking? The first few verses of the chapter indicate that it is speaking of "wisdom." However, as often happens with Old Testament prophetic or poetic passages the subject changes from a general application to specific application to someone in particular. It is clear that these verses must be speaking of a person rather than the abstract quality of wisdom because it states that "I was brought forth" (v 24, 25). If we were to conclude that this refers to the *quality* of wisdom, then we would also have to conclude that there was a time, before God brought forth wisdom when wisdom did not exist and that therefore at one point, God was not wise. This person mentioned in verses 22-31 has some very particular specifications which could apply to only one Being in the universe. Let us look at some of these specifications:

1. The person was "**brought forth**" (born, begotten. v 24, 25) The term "brought forth" is translated as "**given birth**" in the NIV and also in the BBE (Bible in basic English). In the NLT and the NJB as "**I was born.**" Nearly every other version translates it as "brought forth."
2. the person was "set up" (born) before anything was created. A period referred to as "**everlasting**" (v 23)
3. The person was present during all the creative acts of God (v 27-29)
4. The companionship of this person with God was constant and brought "**de-**

light" to God (v 30)

Who is it that the Bible says was "begotten" by God (John 3:16) from the days of "everlasting" (Micah 5:2) Who was present and active during the creation of the entire universe (Eph 3:9; Gen 1:26). And who brought delight to the heart of God (Matt 3:17)? Only one Being in the entire universe fits the description. This passage is clearly referring to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who, according to 1 Cor 1:24 is the wisdom of God. For those who believe that Ellen White was God's messenger, it is significant to note that Ellen White several times stated that this passage refers specifically to the Son of God.

"...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. (PP 34)

Those who deny that Jesus is truly the Son of God have two problems with this passage. Firstly, they see clearly that it speaks of a starting point for Christ. A time when He was "brought forth." Regardless of the fact that this time is so far back in eternity as to be referred to as "everlasting," they have a problem because they feel that Jesus is God Himself and as such could not have had a beginning. Secondly, they feel that the term "brought forth" implies creation and of course, if Jesus was created then He could not have been a divine being and it would not have been possible for Him to have paid the price for man's redemption.

BORN OR CREATED?

Yet, the Scriptures are greater than the opinions, the fears, the misconceptions and the biases of men. Accepting what the Scriptures say as they simply read would bring understanding and would clear up the difficulties. Let us examine the second objection first. Are we suggesting that Jesus was CREATED if we accept that He was BORN of God? Let us be reasonable. Is there anywhere in the Bible where "born" means "created" or vice versa? This matter is very simple. Creation has to do with forming, or bringing something into existence using materials which are not a part of myself or without the use of pre-existing materials. Begetting or the birth process is entirely different. In birth, the new entity was once a part of the original and

is composed of the same substance and possesses the same qualities as the original. The new entity may even be said to have existed before he was born in the sense that his life was already present in his parent's life (Heb 7:9,10). The Biblical testimony everywhere concerning Christ is that He was born of God, not created by God.

The other objection has to do with the question, could Christ truly be God if He had a beginning? Well, first of all Jesus could never be God (Himself). There is only one Being in the Bible who bears the title "God" and this is the Father (John 17:3; 1 Cor 8:6; Rev 21:22). However, the relevant question is, could Jesus be a divine being,

The Biblical testimony everywhere concerning Christ is that He was born of God, not created by God.

could He possess the qualities of God if He had a beginning?

When a child is born, what qualities is he born with? Apart from the fact that his development is not complete, does he come short of his parents in any way? Obviously, if Jesus was BORN, BEGOTTEN, BROUGHT FORTH by God, then He must possess ALL the qualities of God! It is evident that He is not inferior to God in any way but possesses in His nature every attribute which by nature belongs to God. How does the fact that He had a beginning trillions of years ago negate His divinity? This is like saying that because a human son is not as old as his father, he is not as human as his father! The key question, is whether Jesus was BORN or CREATED. Jehovah's Witnesses claim that He was created. Trinitarians say He was neither born nor created. The Bible however, teaches that He was begotten of God way back in the days of "everlasting". This is the only conclusion which fits all the facts of Scripture.

ENLIGHTENED OR CONFUSED?

Many and varied are the ways in which the enemy of all truth has sought to obliterate this truth. Another group of Christians, zealous for the traditions of past centuries have speculated (and pushed these speculations on others) that Jesus, who was **God Himself**, decided billions of years ago to act in the role of a son, while **God Himself** (another one) would act in the role of a Father. At the same time **God Himself**

(still another one!) would act in the role of Holy Spirit. This decision was taken by God Himself who was not three Gods, but one God acting in three roles!! When theories such as these have been imbedded into the minds of simple people it is no wonder that when they are asked simple questions such as "who is God?" Or "was Jesus the true Son of God?" All they can do is stammer and stutter and give a blank stare. Is this what God was trying to tell us when His son made the following simple, straightforward, but sublime statement?

(John 3:16-17) 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. {17} For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

UNPOPULAR TRUTH

Why is the devil so fiercely opposed to the truth that Jesus is the true Son of God? It is not difficult to find the answer to this question. The Bible declares that God's love is revealed in the fact that God gave His Son to die for mankind (John 3:16; 1 John 4:9,10). How can we understand and appreciate the wonder of that love if we fail to discern the identity of the One who was sent? If we fail to grasp the value of the gift that was given and what it cost God to give it? It is only as we understand Christ's identity that we shall love God as we should (1 John 4:19). Therefore our love for God and our victory over sin are linked to the truth that Jesus is the Son of God. "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God (1 John 5:5)?" No wonder the devil hates this truth!

What is difficult to understand is why **Christians** should so determinedly oppose the plainest statements of the word of God. Why should persons who claim to love God and to desire His glory so stubbornly oppose the one truth which reveals the love of God more fully than anything else in the universe? This truly is a mystery almost as great as the so-called Trinity!

Hundreds of years ago during the fourth century AD the spirit of compromise, the desire for worldly popularity combined with the influence of paganism, brought the doctrine of the trinity into the Christian faith. Since that time it has become so deeply ingrained into the traditions of Christendom that it has become the foundation doctrine of most Christian denominations and it is considered blasphemy to

speaking against it. But why do Christian men and women cling so tenaciously to the error? Why, in the light of the plain statements of Scripture, do they continue to embrace a Trinitarian God? The answer is popularity. No church will be accepted today (this has been true for the past 1500 years) unless it professes belief in the trinity. A denial of the trinity will result in a church instantly receiving the label of **CULT**. Therefore, this doctrine which is entirely founded upon the traditions of men rather than the word of God has risen to such universal prominence that when one simply expresses the biblical truth that Jesus is the Son of God, he is accused of heresy.

A friend of mine sat in Sabbath school one day during a discussion on the trinity. Curious, she asked the question, "was Jesus the Son of God?" The immediate response was, "yes, He was." But then she continued by saying, "what I mean is, was He *truly* the actual Son of God?" There was a moment of hesitation and then the answer came, "no, He was not." My friend was stunned. Here, in her own church she was hearing the plain truth of God's word blatantly denied. Not surprisingly it was just a matter of a few weeks before she stopped attending that church.

The popular churches of today can never accept that Jesus was the true Son of God. Neither can those independent ministries which are seeking acceptance. In order to be even given a hearing, to be even considered respectable one must first embrace the idol trinity. Therefore many groups professedly seeking reformation will not accept the truth of the Father and the Son because to do so would result in the loss of what meager influence they have with the established churches. In the pitiful hope that they will someday be recognized and gain a big name for themselves, they walk the well-trammeled road of tradition, in the name of reformation.

Let us be certain of one thing however, apostasy will never be reformed by apostasy. To take the first step in compromise is to begin to play by Satan's rules. He will win the battle eventually. All truth is safe and nothing else is safe. "Thy word is truth." Only by faithfully teaching its principles can we ever hope to make headway against the growing tide of apostasy sweeping over the entire world.

THE APOSTLE'S TESTIMONY

Did the apostles believe in a trinity? Apart from the books of Luke and Acts the entire New Testament was written by men

who had been personally taught by the Lord Jesus. Even the apostle Paul, though he never knew Jesus personally while He was on earth testifies that he was taught personally by Christ (Galatians 1:11,12). Did Jesus reveal a Trinitarian God to these apostles? Did He teach them this doctrine which was so radically different from the Old Testament concept of God? If He did, why didn't they proclaim it as forcefully and as clearly as they proclaimed that Jesus was the **Son** of God? Why is it that this doctrine "is not explicitly taught in the New Testament (Encarta Britannica)" but is rather "inferred" from certain passages? Is this the way that God reveals important truths? Merely giving hints and leaving us to formulate our conclusions? Why is it that the statements of the New Testament consistently declare that there is only **ONE GOD** and that this one God is the Father (1 Cor. 8:4-6; John 17:3; Eph. 4:6)? Didn't these apostles know the truth about God? How can we conclude that their writings suggest that God is a Trinity when they themselves proclaimed Him to be an individual? Do we have the contradictory situation where Christ's appointed depositories of His truth hinted that God was a Trinity, but declared that He was a single Person? Why would they do this? Is it that they were suggesting something which they weren't sure of and which they left to later generations of "theologians" to properly work out?

Do you see how clearly this fits into the teachings and principles of Roman Catholicism? The Roman Church teaches that the revelations of the Scriptures are not a complete revelation, sufficient to reveal the way of salvation. They claim that the traditions and teachings of the "church" are a continuing source of revelation and therefore, they take the position that the teachings of the church are above the Bible. For them, it does not pose a problem that the Trinity is not taught in the Bible. It is enough that the Church accepted the doctrine and that for many centuries it has been a teaching of the Church. This for a Roman Catholic is enough to make the doctrine truth.

Protestants, however, insist that the Bible contains all the truth which is necessary for salvation, hence the protestant principle of "sola Scriptura," (The Bible only). When Protestants take the position that a doctrine which is not explicitly taught in the Scriptures, but was developed gradually during the years subsequent to the time of Christ and the apostles, is to be accepted as truth, this is a dangerous precedent. In taking this position they have stepped onto the ground of Roman Ca-

tholicism and have thereby opened the door to the acceptance of all the other unscriptural and even anti-scriptural teachings of Rome.



After we completed this article the following excerpt from a Roman Catholic publication was sent to us by Tony Milekic of Australia. Please read it carefully.

SCRIPTURE ALONE?

21 reasons to *reject Sola Scriptura*

by Joel Peters

Chapter 9.

Heresiarchs and Heretical Movements Based Their Doctrines on Scripture Interpreted Apart from Tradition and the Magisterium.

If you look at the history of the early Church, you will see that it continually struggled against heresies and those who pro-



moted them. We also see the Church responding to those threats again and again by convening councils and turning to Rome to settle disputes in matters of doctrine and discipline. For example, Pope Clement intervened in a controversy in the Church at Corinth at the end of the 1st century and put an end to a schism there. In the 2nd century, Pope Victor threatened to excommunicate a large portion of the Church in the East because of a dispute about when Easter should be celebrated. In the earlier part of the 3rd century, Pope Callistus pronounced the condemnation of the Sabellian heresy.

In the case of these heresies and/or conflicts in discipline that would arise, the people involved would defend their erroneous beliefs by their respective interpretations of Scripture, apart from Sacred Tradition and the teaching Magisterium of the Church. A good illustration of this point is the case of Arius, the 4th-century priest who declared that the Son of God was a creature and was not co-equal with the Father.

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DOES GOD SPEAK BY JESUS ONLY?

Some thoughts on a touchy subject - by Howard Williams

It is now being taught by several groups of Christians, that Jesus is the final and only revelation of God to his church today. This view has been arrived at, based on a passage of scripture found in Heb. 1:1,2 - "*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;*" The promoters of this idea seem to understand this passage as saying that in ancient times God spoke to the men of old through prophets, but in our day He speaks to us **only** through His Son Jesus. Among those who advocate this belief, are those who teach that God does not kill. Their point is that God never inspired these prophets when they gave instructions to kill, destroy etc. Neither was He inspiring them when they stated that God did these things.

It is difficult to understand how we can conclude that it was not God working through the prophets of the Old Testament, while the very text used to show that Jesus is God's only revelation, says also, "*God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets...*" Which prophets were here referred to? Jesus made reference to several prophets to include Moses, Isaiah and Jeremiah. (*Matt.2:17; 15:7; 27:9; Mk.1:44; 7:10; 12:26; Luke 2:22; 3:4; 4:17*) In other words these prophets were all led by God, or Jesus would not have quoted from them, but would have made it known which were false and which were true. (Luke 24:27,44)

One publication states, "*We must discard the Old Testament for its erroneous teachings of who God is and what His character is like.*" Let us think logically. If the Old Testament's record was not correct how could Jesus sanction its authenticity by quoting from it? Is it likely that Jesus, the fullest revelation of God would make such an error? Evidently the mistake lies with us

"*The life and teaching of Christ,*" they say, "*is our only example.*" "*Christ came to show us what the Father was like.*" The only way that we can reasonably view the evidences of the scripture without a bias is if we are honest and sincere. Let us briefly examine the life and teachings of Christ to see if these reveal that God never kills.

The life of Christ

Christ's life on earth consisted of his everyday activities, the things he did. We are all agreed also that Christ lived as his Father would have lived if the Father had been here in person.(Jn.14:9)

In Matthew 21:19 we have the story of Jesus approaching a fig tree which had leaves, indicating that fruits were on it. When Jesus came near to the tree he found out that the tree was not bearing any fruit, but that it was a pretender. What was Jesus' action? Was he just disappointed at the tree and wished it had fruits on it? Did he simply leave it to suffer the consequences of its barrenness? No, no, no, Jesus **cursed** the tree and "immediately it withered away," Does God have a double standard? Is he more willing to destroy nature than He is to destroy men? How could Jesus instruct the disciples to cast their nets on the other side for a big draught of fish (Jn. 21:6) or even instruct Peter to catch a fish.(Matt. 17:27) How could Jesus himself cook fish for the disciples while they were at sea if indeed, God does not kill (Jn.21:1-14)?

The teachings of Christ

In Matthew 10:28 Jesus made us know that we need not be afraid of those who can destroy our body and can do no more, but that we should, "*fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*" Who is this HIM that Jesus is referring to? Who is this Him who is able to do more than merely destroy the body, is this Satan? Of course not. Satan himself will be destroyed in the final fires. He has no power to destroy the soul. This Person referred to here, is God. Again, in the parable of the wheat and the tares, Jesus says HIS angels will gather the tares into bundles to be burned.(Matt. 13:30) Who is it that destroys these tares by burning them?

Also, In Matthew 22 Jesus told a parable about a KING who had a wedding for his SON. Who was this KING? The answer to this question is very critical to what comes next, because after those that were bidden to the feast killed his servants and rejected the invitation THE KING "*was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.*" This same KING (after the invitation went out to those in the highways)went in to see his guests and found one not hav-

ing a wedding garment, and THE KING told his servants, "*Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness.*"

In Matthew 25:30-46 Jesus brings to view the scenes of the judgment of the church and he makes reference again to A KING, who will sentence those present before him on his right and on his left. Notice in particular what fate those on the left met, and who apportioned their punishment. These are clearly the teachings of Christ in regards to PEOPLE who have rejected his invitation of mercy. As honest and true children of God can we say this is not the teaching of the scripture?

Calvary

"Go to Calvary and you will see how God deals with sin," they say. Their understanding is that when God turned away his face from his Son on the cross, it demonstrated how He deals with sin and they conclude that He has no other way of dealing with sinners. Their belief is that He will use the same method in dealing with all who are lost. Is this the truth? Was Calvary a revelation to the world of how God deals with sin? If we begin with wrong assumptions we will end with wrong conclusions. Calvary was never a demonstration of how God deals with sin, but was rather a revelation of what sin did to God and his Son. Jesus was not a sinner, he was paying the price for sinners, thus the scripture says, "*For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin...*"

An Appeal

Beloved I know that the truth about the love of God in giving his Son for us has opened our eyes to the character of God as never before and our hearts are filled with gratitude to God for his love in return, but let us be careful that we don't harm the character of the Father and his Son by teaching doctrines contrary to the scriptures. Any doctrine which tries to suggest that we discard any portion of scripture is a doctrine to be shunned because it cannot be from God.

This is the truth as I understand it from the Bible. Let us pray that the lord will lead us to His truth as found in **all** scripture



SWEET AND BITTER WATERS

Thoughts from the editor's desk

“Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? {12} Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs?...” (James 3:11-12)

The obvious answer to this question is no. It is not possible for one source to be both good and evil. It is either one or the other and it is not difficult to discern which side a person is really on.

(Mat 7:16) Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

(Mat 7:20) Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

In recent times this reality has forced itself upon me each time I have read from the writings of Ellen G. White. Two things have wrestled in my mind. One, the accusations of deceptiveness, arrogance, plagiarism and fraud which have been leveled against her, and the other, the unquestionable **power** and purity which are present in her writings. Obviously, I never knew Ellen White personally. The only standard by which I can judge her are her writings. I speak the truth, I do not lie. There is never a time that I read a single page from the pen of Ellen White without feeling a hungering, a yearning to live a more holy life, to be more like Christ. Never a time I read that I don't feel my will strengthened to resist temptation and to relinquish bad habits. My friends will tell you that I comment on this quite often.

Where did the power come from in these writings? No honest person can deny that it is there. A pure holy power which motivates men and women to reach for a higher standard in loving and serving God and His Son. One person who has now rejected Ellen White as a servant of God was heard to comment, “I can't believe that I used to get so many blessings from these books (the books written by Ellen White)! The Bible insists that God does not work through the instruments of Satan, so the question comes again, where did the power come from in these writings? Was it that Ellen White borrowed or plagiarized every page of every book and article she ever wrote?

Some years ago Vance Ferrell wrote a series of articles condemning Morris Venden. These articles went into some detailed descriptions of certain aspects of Venden's

personal life. The aim of these tracts was to prove that Venden was an evil person who had never been used by God. However, in these articles Vance Ferrell asked an interesting question. How was it that a man as evil as Ferrell declared Venden to be, was able to write books which blessed people so much? The answer which Vance Ferrell proposed was that it was all creditable to Morris Venden's secretary! As she edited his sermons and compiled them into books, she somehow managed to inject so much of her own personality that the books proved to be a blessing to many people. In actual fact, according to Ferrell, these books were really the secretary's books and not Venden's at all!

Now I know very little about Morris Venden or Vance Ferrell for that matter, but at the time when I read Ferrell's articles I thought the answer which he proposed was childish and simplistic. This was compounded by the fact that I had listened to a few of Venden's tapes and read a couple of his books and found the style as well as the content of both the spoken sermons and the books to be very similar. I concluded that Vance Ferrell had come to this conclusion because of necessity rather than facts. He had painted Venden as such an evil person that he realized that it would not have been possible for the writings of such a person to so positively affect the lives of people as Venden's books apparently did. Therefore he proposed the idea that Venden's books were really written by his secretary.

Are we not seeing the same simplistic and unrealistic approach to Ellen White by her critics? Where did the power and the blessing come from in her writings? Well, we are told, she borrowed these writings - all of them. In reading her writings we are really reading from Conybeare and Howsen, the apocrypha etc. etc. The strange thing is that I have looked at a couple of these books from which she supposedly copied and the writing styles are completely different to hers. The words may be similar, but somehow when Ellen White got hold of a phrase, a sentence or a passage and rephrased it, it suddenly seemed to become a living breathing thing charged with the power of God! Is this bias or prejudice on my part? I don't think so. There have been times when I started reading a quotation without knowing its source. Upon feeling a quickening within and a stirring of

the heart I have looked at the reference and found, not surprisingly that the author was Ellen White. There has got to be a reason for this.

The point is, if Satan was Ellen White's master then he surely worked at cross purposes with himself because the tendency of her writings is ever and always to draw men and women closer to Christ and to motivate them to separate from sin. If Ellen White was a false prophet then we are left with the impossible situation where God and Satan were both working through the same vessel at the same time!

What are the main reasons why people reject the prophetic gift of Ellen White? Is it that they find her writings to be discouraging and blasphemous? Do her books lead people away from Christ? Actually even her critics admit the very opposite. The main problem people have with Ellen White is the doctrines which she taught and supported. The major stumbling block is the fact that she taught a literal two-apartment heavenly sanctuary, an end-time atonement and an investigative judgement. When people come to the conclusion that these doctrines are false, then they have no choice but to reject their greatest advocate, Ellen White. All the negative conclusions which have been reached, the suggestions of mental disorders, the charges of plagiarism, the insinuations of dishonesty, have all arisen as a consequence of opposition to these doctrines of the heavenly sanctuary, the investigative judgement and the final atonement.

Some of the charges against Ellen White may be true. However, after more than a hundred years I really have a lot of questions about the evidence being “discovered.” I really wonder what the public records would reveal about any of us one hundred years from today if time were to last that long! The only time I ever got mentioned in the public media was a few years ago when an article appeared in two newspapers accusing me of being the leader of a cult whose disciples practiced human sacrifice, sexually abused children and drank human blood. It was claimed that I, as the leader was so powerful that I was able to have any member of the group as a sexual partner that I desired, whether male or female. To compound matters, this article was written by a police detective freelancing as a newspaper reporter and

who claimed to have received his information from a member of the group! After the initial feelings of outrage I laughed off the matter and ignored it. I knew that anyone who knew me in the slightest way would realize that it was all a ridiculous fabrication. However, what would be the result if someone begins to dig into my past a hundred years in the future and this article appears as evidence? I really hope that if it comes to that, that my judgement would not be based on that kind of evidence. I suppose that even the testimony of the SDA church would not paint a very flattering picture of me. I would hope that men would judge me and come to conclusions about the kind of person I was on the basis of what I had written, rather than what men wrote about me because it will still be true then, as it is now and always has been that a fountain cannot send forth sweet and bitter waters at the same time.

SCRIPTURE ALONE?

Continued from page 4

Arius and those who followed him quoted verses from the Bible to "prove" their claims. The disputes and controversies which arose over his teachings became so great that the first Ecumenical Council was convened in Nicea in 325 AD. to settle them. The Council, under the authority of the Pope declared Arius' teachings to be heretical and made some decisive declarations about the person of Christ, and it did so based on what Sacred Tradition had to say regarding the Scripture verses in question. Here we see the teaching authority of the Church being used as the final say in an extremely important doctrinal matter. If there had been no teaching authority to appeal to, then Arius' error could have overtaken the Church. As it is, a majority of the bishops at that time fell for the Arian heresy. Even though Arius had based his arguments on the Bible and probably "compared Scripture with Scripture," the fact is that he arrived at an heretical conclusion. It was the teaching authority of the Church - hierarchically constituted - which stepped in and declared he was wrong.

The application is obvious. If you ask a Protestant whether or not Arius was correct in his belief that the Son was created, he will, of course, respond in the negative. Emphasize, then, that even though Arius presumably "compared Scripture with Scripture" he nonetheless arrived at an erroneous conclusion. If this were true

for Arius, what guarantee does the Protestant have that it is not also true for his interpretation of a given Bible passage?

The very fact that the Protestant knows Arius' interpretations were heretical implies that an objectively true or "right" interpretation exists for the Biblical passages he used. The issue, then, becomes a question of how we can know what that true interpretation is. The only possible answer is that there must be, out of necessity, an infallible authority to tell us. That infallible authority, the Catholic Church, declared Arius heretical. Had the Catholic Church not been both infallible and authoritative in its declaration, then believers would have had no reason whatsoever to reject Arius' teachings, and the whole of Christianity today might have been comprised of modern day Arians. *It is evident, then, that using the Bible alone is not a guarantee of arriving at doctrinal truth. The above described result is what happens when the erroneous doctrine of Solo Scriptura is used as a guiding principle, and the history of the Church and the numerous heresies it has had to address are undeniable testimony to this fact.*

Passing of Bill Stringfellow

We regret to announce that our dear brother Bill Stringfellow passed away on Wednesday April 21. Many petitions went up to our Father for his healing, but our Father in His wisdom chose differently. While we submit to His sovereign will knowing that He does all things well we will all miss Bill lots and lots and lots. He was a warrior for the truth. Only in eternity will it be known how much good was accomplished for the cause of truth by his inspiring videos and books. May we meet him again soon in the resurrection of the just.



Yesterday .. Today and Tomorrow

There are two days in every week which we should not worry about, two days which should be kept free from fear and apprehension.

One of these days is YESTERDAY with its mistakes and cares, its faults and blunders, its aches and pains. YESTERDAY has passed forever beyond our control. All the money in the world cannot bring back YESTERDAY. We cannot undo a single act we performed; we cannot erase a single word we said.

The other day we should not worry about is TOMORROW with its possible adversities, its burdens, its large promise and poor performance. TOMORROW is also beyond our immediate control. TOMORROW'S sun will rise, either in splendor or behind a mask of clouds - but it will rise (with or without us).

Until it does, we have no stake in TOMORROW, for it is as yet unborn. This leaves only one day - TODAY - Any man can fight the battle of just one day.

It is only when you and I add the burden of those two awful eternity's - YESTERDAY and TOMORROW that we break down. It is not the experience of TODAY that drives us mad - it is remorse or bitterness for something which happened YESTERDAY - and the dread of what TOMORROW may bring. Let us therefore, live but one day at a time.



Below is a flyer describing our latest missionary project. This outreach is designed for non-Adventists and has already received a very encouraging response. Thus far we have approximately 70 persons enrolled with new students being added nearly every day.

Although the course is designed especially for non Adventists, we welcome all who wish to enrol. A few of our own people have already enrolled. If you would like to have some appli-

cation forms to hand out to acquaintances or just for general distribution, then please write and request a supply. We will be happy to send them to you.

Write to:

Waymarks To Eternity
C/O Restoration Ministries
P.O. Box 23, Knockpatrick
Manchester, Jamaica W.I.
ph. (876) 624-0944 or 904-7392

Waymarks To Eternity

- How much do you know about the great crisis about to break upon the world?
- Are you concerned about your eternal destiny?
- Are you afraid of the future and in need of comfort and assurance?

Restoration Ministries offers a unique Bible Study Correspondence Course entitled, *Waymarks To Eternity*. This course is unique not only in the messages presented, but also in the fact that each study is presented on Audio Cassette Tape. The course consists of 26 lessons in two parts, and covers the following topics:

PART 1

1. Religious Deception
2. Nebuchadnezzar's Dream
3. The Beasts of Daniel 7
4. Who is The Antichrist?
5. The Work of Antichrist
6. Was the Sabbath only for The Jews?
7. Law and Grace
8. What does it mean to be saved?
9. The Seal of the Living God
10. What is The Mark?
11. The Day of The Lord (part 1) *the Judgement*
12. The Day of The Lord (part 2) *Armageddon*
13. The Offence of The Cross



PART 2

14. The Faith which Pleases God
15. Which is The True Church?
16. Who is a Church Member?
17. The Spirit of Prophecy
18. The Remnant Church
19. Babylon's Final Rise and Fall
20. The Gift that God gave.
21. God on Trial
22. Who is the Holy Spirit
23. Who is this God?
24. The Things which are revealed.
25. What happens when we die?
26. The body temple

If you are interested in this correspondence Course, all you have to do is fill out the enclosed form and mail it to us. We will immediately send you **tape #1** of the course, along with a test paper. After you have listened to the tape, answer the test questions and mail the test paper back to us **along with the AUDIO TAPE**. You may copy the tape if you wish, but we ask that you send back the original, or, if you wish to keep it, send the sum of \$30.00. We will then send you **tape #2** and so on until you receive all 13 tapes of part 1. Please note that you must send back each tape in order to receive the next one in the series. When you have completed all 12 lessons you will receive a certificate and if you wish, you may move on to part 2 of the course.

CHRISTIAN COMMITMENT

"I'm a part of the fellowship of the unashamed. I have Holy Spirit power. The die has been cast. I have stepped over the line. The decision has been made. I'm a disciple of His. I wont look back, let up, slow down, back away or be still.

My past is redeemed, my present makes sense, my future is secure. I'm finished and done with low living, sight walking, small planning, smooth knees, colorless dreams, tamed visions, mundane talking, cheap living and dwarfed goals.

I no longer need pre-eminence, prosperity, position, promotions, plaudits or popularity. I don't have to be right, first, tops, recognized, praised, regarded or rewarded. I now live by faith, lean on His presence, walk by patience, lift by prayer and labor by power.

My face is set, my gait is fast, my goal is heaven, my road is narrow, my way rough, my companions few, my Guide reliable, my mission clear. I cannot be bought, compromised, de-toured lured away, turned back, de-luded or delayed.

I will not flinch in the face of sacrifice, hesitate in the presence of adversity, negotiate at the table of the enemy, ponder at the pool of popularity or meander in the maze of mediocrity.

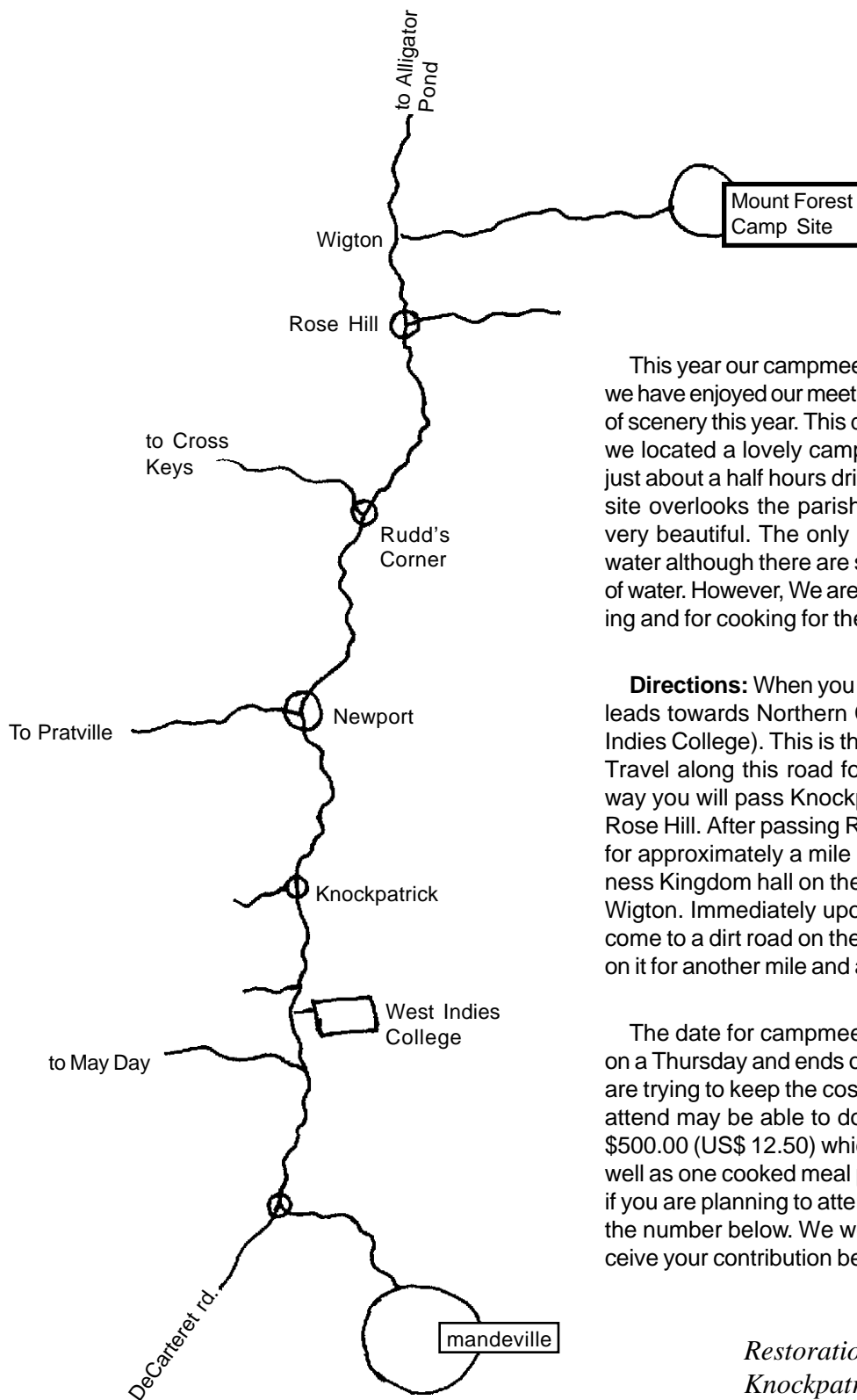
I wont give up, shut up or let up until I have stayed up, stored up, prayed up and preached up for the cause of Christ. I am a disciple of Jesus. I must go till He comes, give till I drop, preach all I know and work till He stops me.

And when He comes for His own, He will have no problem recognizing me – my banner will be clear. Amen."

written by an unknown African pastor

CAMPMEETING

July 20-23



This year our campmeeting moves to a new location. Though we have enjoyed our meetings at Copper we decided on a change of scenery this year. This decision was further encouraged when we located a lovely campsite at Mount Forest in Manchester, just about a half hours drive away from Mandeville. This campsite overlooks the parish of St. Elizabeth and the scenery is very beautiful. The only drawback is that there is no running water although there are several tanks which have a fair supply of water. However, We are planning on trucking water in for drinking and for cooking for the duration of our campmeeting.

Directions: When you get to Mandeville, take the road which leads towards Northern Caribbean University (formerly West Indies College). This is the same road which leads to Newport. Travel along this road for approximately 10 miles. Along the way you will pass Knockpatrick, Newport, Rudd's Corner and Rose Hill. After passing Rose Hill continue along the main road for approximately a mile and a half. Look for a Jehovah's Witness Kingdom hall on the left side of the road at a place called Wigton. Immediately upon passing this Kingdom Hall you will come to a dirt road on the right. Turn on this road and continue on it for another mile and a half. This road ends at the campsite.

The date for campmeeting this year is July 20-23. It begins on a Thursday and ends on the Sunday following. As always we are trying to keep the cost to a minimum so that all who wish to attend may be able to do so. We are asking a contribution of \$500.00 (US\$ 12.50) which will cover the cost of camp fees, as well as one cooked meal per day (lunch). Please notify us early if you are planning to attend by writing to the address, or calling the number below. We would also appreciate it if we could receive your contribution before the end of June.

*Restoration Ministries, P.O. Box 23,
Knockpatrick P.O., Manchester,
Jamaica W.I. ph. (876)904-7392*

Biblical Interpretation

David Clayton

“And if any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know (1 Cor 8:2,).”

In this verse, the emphasis is on man’s proneness to make mistakes, to misjudge, to misinterpret and to come to wrong conclusions. Here, man is put in his proper place. The man who thinks he knows a great deal, in reality, by that very misconception of thinking himself to be knowledgeable shows that he really knows nothing of the knowledge which is really worthwhile.

More than once in examining the Scriptures this thought has been forcefully impressed on my mind. God’s ways and methods of revealing Himself and His truth are not limited by man’s parameters and are not circumscribed by man’s methods of interpretation and study.

“UNORTHODOX” METHODS

Several words and phrases have been coined or borrowed to describe the various approaches which men take in studying the Scriptures. One hears of, “exegesis,” “hermeneutics,” the “historical method,” etc. I have been impressed, however, as I have examined the approach of the New Testament writers to this question of Biblical interpretation, that their methods were remarkably “unorthodox” and would certainly have been condemned by the majority of today’s theologians. They would have been accused of using Scripture out of context, of misapplying and reapplying Scripture. In fact, judging by human perceptions, these accusations would seem to be quite justified. However, there is one important factor which we cannot overlook, and this one single factor, justifies all that human wisdom would otherwise condemn. This factor is the Spirit of Prophecy. The holy Spirit dwelt in those Bible writers and gave them interpretations of Scripture which were “unorthodox,” contrary to context and generally outside of the scope of ordinary human reasoning. Nevertheless, when God gives a certain meaning to Scripture – to His own word – who dares to say that He has used it “out of context” and “applied it wrongly?”

What is my point in all this? My point is that God may take a verse of Scripture and apply it in ways which are totally unexpected and which are not evident to the ordinary person. Nevertheless, when God

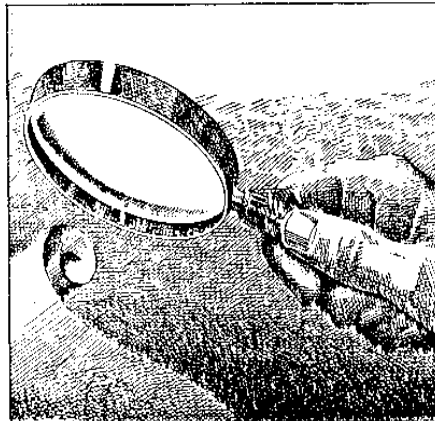
says this is what a particular verse means, through His prophets, through Spirit-filled persons, then no person should have the temerity to say that this is not at least one meaning of that verse. Let me give some examples of what I mean.

OUT OF CONTEXT?

“(Mat 1:23) 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.”

In quoting this verse to prove the identity of Jesus, Matthew quoted from Isaiah 7:14. When we actually go to Isaiah chapter 7 we find something interesting. verse 15 tells us that the child would eat “butter and honey,” and verse 16 tells us that before the child would be old enough to know the difference between good and evil, the lands of Israel and Syria would be forsaken by the kings of both countries! When we read from verse 1-16 we see very clearly that, *in context*, this passage does not seem to be speaking of Christ.

The Kings of Syria and Israel, Rezin and Pekah made war against Ahaz the king of



Judah. The Lord sent, through the prophet Isaiah to tell Ahaz that he would deliver him from these two kings and God told him to ask for a sign. When Ahaz refused to ask God for a sign saying he would not “tempt God,” God said that He Himself would give him a sign. This sign was that a virgin (young woman) would conceive and give birth to a child whose name would be called Immanuel. Before this child would be old enough to know the difference between evil and good both the kings of Israel and Syria would be overthrown.

Why, then did Matthew apply this verse to the birth of Christ? It was because he

had the Spirit of prophecy. God’s spirit showed him that there was another meaning to the verse which was not evident to the ordinary person who could only examine Scripture from the viewpoint of exegesis and hermeneutics and context etc. When we recognize how prevalent this kind of interpretation is in the Bible, then we will realize that one of the accusations which we cannot bring against a prophet is that he or she uses passages out of context, because only God and those to whom He reveals it, know the true intent of the Scriptures.

Let us examine a few more examples of this “unorthodox” method of interpretation.

Matthew 2:18

“In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.”

This verse was quoted from Jer. 31:15. In context it refers to the Jews who were taken away captive or slaughtered at the time of the Babylonian captivity. The holy Spirit showed Matthew another application when the children of Bethlehem were slaughtered by Herod.

We may examine also the following statements by Jesus. When we examine the passages from which He quoted it is clear that in context, these verses meant something other than the meaning which Jesus gave to them.

(Mat 24:15) When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

Daniel 11:31 and Daniel 12:11 speak of the abomination of desolation which Jesus referred to. Yet as we read these passages it becomes clear that Jesus was reapplying these prophecies. The primary application of these prophecies is not to the destruction of Jerusalem. However, when we compare Matthew 24: 15 with Luke 21:20, it becomes clear that what Jesus was referring to was the surrounding of Jerusalem by the Roman armies at the time of its destruction in AD 70.

(Mark 7:6) He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is writ-

ten, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

This quotation was taken from Isaiah 29:13. Jesus said “Well did Isaiah prophecy of you hypocrites”. However look at the context and ask yourself, “how did Jesus apply that verse to people hundreds of years later?” The answer is, the Spirit of prophecy. Most expositors of the Bible today would take great exception to a verse which clearly had application to a specific generation hundreds of years before being applied to another generation many years later. Notice how Jesus put it: “...*Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites...*” In context the verse was clearly applying to the people of Isaiah’s day. Jesus however, stated that Isaiah had prophesied of His generation. “*you hypocrites.*” If a prophet should use a verse of Scripture in a similar manner today there would no doubt be a storm of protest and accusations of texts being used out of context.

INSPIRED WORDS

It seems to me as I read the scriptures that the early Christians had a much different concept of the Scriptures as the word of God, than we do today. They did not regard the Scriptures as merely a historical document which could be deciphered by learned men using the tools of grammatical and contextual analysis. For them the Scriptures were alive. They were the living word of God and that word once proclaimed by God continued to be active and to have relevance regardless of how any previous generation might have understood it. It was not that God had once spoken in His word. It was that God was presently speaking in that word. God was still revealing Himself and His purposes to the present generation by His living word which was adaptable to the needs of every generation.

These Christians (and Christ Himself) believed that the very **words** of Scripture and not just the thoughts had been divinely ordained by God and therefore they found many thoughts and meanings in words, in missing words and in the very structure of words which were not evident from an examination of the context. Let us look at three examples of what I mean.

(a) Melchizedec.

(Heb 7:3) Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.

Did Melchizedec have a father or a mother? Did he ever die? For hundreds of years people have argued about the identity of Melchizedec, some even claiming that he must have been Christ himself, because of what is stated in Heb. 7: 3. Some have even claimed that he was God the Father because it says that Melchizedec had no father. They claim that this applies only to God the Father. But what is the fact of the matter? Melchizedec was simply an outstanding human follower of Jehovah who was born, lived and died like any other man. Why then does Paul say that he had no end, no beginning, no genealogy etc.? Again, it is a question of how these New Testament Christians interpreted Scripture. As far as Paul was concerned, the Scripture gave no record of Melchizedec’s genealogy, birth or death. This was not simply an oversight on the part of Moses who wrote of Melchizedec, but was something deliberately designed by God so that later on Melchizedec could be used as a type of the priesthood of Christ. God not only inspired the thoughts of Scripture, but actually ordained the very words which should be written, how they should be written and what should be left out. This same fact is brought out in a statement of Jesus when He placed great emphasis and built an argument upon a single word of Scripture. The word was,

(b) “Gods”

(John 10:34-36) Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? {35} If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; {36} Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?

Jesus had claimed to be the Son of God. For this, the Jews accused Him of blasphemy. Jesus replied by quoting from Psalms. 82: 6. In this verse, God, speaking of the children of Israel said, “I said ye are gods, but ye shall die like men.” Jesus made reference to this verse, and added the thought “The Scripture cannot be broken.” What did He mean? The only possible meaning I can find for His words is that He is saying that this one single word, “gods,” used by the Psalmist Asaph to refer to the Israelites could not be changed or deprived of its significance (please note that some modern translations of the Bible translate this word in Psalm 82: 6 as “judges” thereby “breaking” the Scripture). In other words, as far as Jesus was concerned, that word did not appear in that place by

chance. An alternative word could not have been chosen by the writer, Asaph. It was God Himself who had ordained that that word should be in that particular place and therefore, “The Scripture cannot be broken.”

(c) The third example which I would like us to consider, is the question of when the law was given. Seventh-day Adventists and many other Christians contend that there must have been a knowledge of God’s law from the time of the creation. The book of Genesis gives ample evidence that men recognized that killing, stealing, adultery, lying, idolatry etc. were wrong. Abraham was said to have kept God’s “commandments, statutes and laws (Gen. 26:5).” However, there is no record of God ever saying to men “thou shalt not,” in the book of Genesis, except in one place. This was in the garden of Eden when God forbade man to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The next recorded time that God said, “thou shalt not” was after the Exodus when He gave His laws to the children of Israel. Now please notice how the Apostle Paul argues strictly on the basis of what Scripture says:

(Rom 5:12-14) Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: {13} (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. {14} Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

In this passage, Paul is trying to prove something. He is trying to prove that death passed upon all men as a result of Adam’s transgression, rather than as a result of the individual transgression of each person. One man sinned, and therefore death passed upon all men as a result of that one man’s sin. In verse 13 he says that sin was in the world, **until the law**. When he says **until the law** what point is he referring to? He says that sin was in the world, but was not imputed unto people because, there was no law. He continues by saying, that in spite of this, death continued to come to all men during the time from Adam (who received the first command “thou shalt not”) unto the time of Moses (who received the next set of commandments stating “thou shalt not.”). The point he is making is that the people who continued to die in

Continued on back page

BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

Continued from page 9

that period between Adam and Moses were not dying because of their own individual disobedience of God's commandments, because the law was not yet given. Rather, they were dying, they were suffering the consequences of death as a result of Adam's transgression. They did not sin "after the similitude of Adam's transgression" that is, in direct disobedience to a specific command of God. The point is that we all came under the power of death because of one man's disobedience or sin. In the same way, we can all receive the gift of life on the basis of One man's righteousness.

In our day one of the major accusations being brought against Ellen G. White is that she used Bible verses out of context. No person who is familiar with the writ-

ings of Ellen White will deny that this is true. In many cases she reapplied Scripture to fit a particular point she was making. In doing this she was not behaving differently from many of the New Testament writers. In some cases it was simply that the words of Scripture phrased a thought better than she could put it and so she used that particular verse regardless of the primary meaning of the verse in its particular context. In other cases, the Spirit of Prophecy showed a secondary or deeper meaning in the verse which is not immediately evident to those of us who depend on the human tools of "context," "exegesis" "the historical method" etc. It should be evident that if these tools were the only way in which we could interpret the Bible, then the need for divine revelation, the teaching of the Holy Spirit would be unnecessary and the persons really qualified to understand the Scriptures

would be the ones with the highest I.Q. or the broadest education. It goes without saying that God has never ever circumscribed understanding of His words by such criteria. It should be evident that He will not do so in these last days either.

(1 Cor 1:26-29) For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: {27} But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; {28} And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: {29} That no flesh should glory in his presence.

With Open Face

*Restoration Ministries
P.O. Box 23, Knockpatrick
Manchester, Jamaica W.I.
ph. (876) 904-7392*