

Open Face

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Chris' Story

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My life has truly been an odyssey ever since I first asked God to “help me,” which happened about 5 years ago, when I was in the Marine Corps. I was in the Marines because my childhood left me “mad as hell” and I wanted to get back at the whole world. I wanted to hurt people I didn’t even know. I know it sounds horrible, but this was truly my motivation in life.

It sounds like a low place to be, but I actually got lower, God let me get to the place where I would finally beg for His help, and I did. He put me in the care of an Adventist pastor, a self-supporting independent, whose name was Pastor Robus. His ministry was something like John the Baptist’s. He was bold. (Now, I understand, that when many people hear about a bold man with a ‘John, the Baptist’ type of ministry, they imagine some wild, dangerous looking man who is in everybody’s face, but not this guy. He was not that way—he was real. He was a nice, down to earth guy, whose talent from God was to be able to connect with real folks, folks who had heavy issues and actually needed to hear a few hard words instead of being continually pampered...)

Robus had a remarkable personal testimony that revealed that none are too far out there to be out of the reach of a God that loves us. The depth and openness of his testimony really touched my heart and it was the first time that any kind of religious person said anything that got to me. I felt this was the answer to my prayer when I had cried for God to help me, and I settled it in my mind that I would give my life to this “God.” I use quotation marks here because I want to illustrate, that in my understanding at that time, God was mostly very vague. All I understood about God was that He is Almighty, Omniscient, and very Kind. I understood that I would have to stand before Him in judgment, so I reckoned that I should forsake my evil ways and live very carefully.

Not long after this encounter with Robus, I was kicked out of the Marine Corps because of my refusal to receive a vaccination against anthrax. I had to spend a month in prison for this decision. Pastor Robus and his wife visited me nearly everyday, and the time in the brig was actually a beneficial experience for me—I had lots of time to think and reflect about my life and about this new-found religion.

Early religious experiences

After my discharge from the service, I traveled for a couple of years with Robus and his wife. continuously around America, visiting churches and various environments where people might do well to hear personal testimonies of deliverance from the bad life or hear the John the Baptist-

style admonishments to repent and live uprightly before a holy God. I liked this time...it seemed that a good number of people were strongly encouraged to trust God, and many people renewed their commitment to Him after hearing these testimonies. It was also then, that I began to take a serious interest in studying the Bible, but this was, at first, a very hard endeavor for me. It seemed that everybody was trying to talk to me in “church-speak” and it was kind of intimidating for someone like me. I also had a bad childhood that plagued me like scales on my eyes. Many things, I simply was blind to, because I had so much unfinished business inside.

But I was determined to learn. Robus and his wife were very good friends because I could talk to them, about my past. They were real with me, so I could be real with them. It felt so good to get things off my chest. In my prayers, I asked God to purify my heart, to forgive my sins, to change me, to accept me, but there was still a lot of confusion about what to pray for. There was evidence that God was using these people, and this situation, to help me, but He still seemed very far away.

During this time, I received a heavy, albeit informal, dose of SDA indoctrination—the Sabbath, Mark of the Beast, Health Reform, 1844, etc. I also got to see how Robus could calmly and convincingly prove these sure points of faith when in an argument with someone from a different denomination. However, nothing, either for, nor against, was ever said about the Trinity. I scarcely recall ever hearing the word uttered! This pastor was, with no malice intended, a bit unsophisticated, and it wouldn't have been in his nature to approach such a mysterious theme as the Trinity—and I cannot say, with, any degree of confidence, what his Christological conclusions were. He was a ‘one-sermon preacher’ and what he preached, he preached well, but the Trinity was simply outside of his box, and being a fair man, he simply didn't try to teach what he didn't know.

However, during all this traveling, I was exposed to many confusing and contradictory ideas (even within Adventism). Now I recognize these philosophies as modalism, tritheism, and Tinitarianism. Yes, Very confusing—the only thing I knew for sure was that God was Supreme, Almighty, Holy, Omniscient and of great kindness. I knew I better live rightly before Him and I thanked Him for the many blessings I received, and I asked Him to forgive the sins I was committing. Looking back, I see the abject poverty of my religion. My view of God was very similar to the portrayal of Allah in the Koran... Did I have reverence? Yes. Fear? Yes. A longing to stop sinning? Yes. But didn't know the love of God? No, and even worse, I was hardly aware of such ignorance. I also could not deny that my afore mentioned reverence toward God and aversion to sin were easily overcome by the right temptations—namely female temptations. I could not realize that this failure I was experiencing was never going to be defeated until I understood “what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon” me. That love, the greatest thing about God was very vague to me at best. What poverty of soul!

More perplexities

Eventually I parted ways with old Robus and found myself living in the Czech Republic. In Prague, the capital, there is a hearty core of SDA-ism, several churches outreach programs and a large health-food industry called Country Life, where I worked during this time. It was a time of growth in that I made some very good friends. However, I still found no answer to the perplexities that greatly hindered me from having abundant life. When I exposed my feelings of spiritual lack to other Adventists, many admitted to experiencing the same void. Some offered possibilities that they clung to in their own lives which could be summarized as follows:

- 1: God is hardly revealed to us, nor does He regularly reveal Himself to people especially in our day.
- 2: God is very far from us, but if we persevere in our faith and hope, we will one day see Him (hopefully...)

3: We will never experience perfection of character until we are changed by God immediately prior to our entrance into His kingdom. (Just keep sinning less and less..)

You know most people (Adventists) would look at these three items and see no fault in them. And this was bothering me. “Highly educated” people were confirming this to me in books, sermons, and personal discussions. They were basically telling me that the lack and disappointment I was feeling was Gospel.

As much as I might hope to avoid it, I often felt like I would be one who would be gnashing his teeth and wailing in the great and terrible day of the Lord. This internal dilemma intensified greatly when The local pastor here in Minneapolis insisted upon belief in the Trinity. (You see, I had just come back to the States with this beautiful young lady from Prague that I was in love with and planned on marrying. She wanted to be a Christian, so we went to this near by SDA Church for pre-marital counselling) I thought the idea of the Trinity was very confusing and didn’t like the term “Trinity” because it was obviously Catholic, but the pastor insisted that it was simply a more universal and modern way of saying, “godhead.” Well, I bought that for the time being, but the teaching itself confirmed that the “Trinity was even more horribly confusing than I was afraid it would be. I was really frustrated, but before the session was over, I was somehow certain that this was all very wrong.

I didn’t want to spoil my fiancé’s new found joy in discovering Christianity by revealing my severe internal frustrations. Besides, because of a few other tense exchanges with this pastor, I was sure he hated me, and he had a way of making me appear as a seditious and strife-seeking person whenever I had a reasonable reservation about something he was teaching or advocating. So, I held my peace, mostly because I valued Dasha’s (my fiancé’s) Christian education and I still had no wisdom with which to counter what he was teaching. I had a deep gut feeling he was full of falsehoods, but I didn’t know the truth any better than he did, so I waited patiently for enlightenment. All I had for sure was still the stern ‘Allah’ idea of God. I really wanted to reject all that I had heard about the Trinity and wanted to question it, but at the same time, I was also afraid that I would be committing some great sin in doing so.

I continued to keep this all to myself but one day Dasha expressed to me that she was a bit confused about Michael the Archangel. Well, I thought, no problem—this is a basic SDA doctrine, and so I began with a sense of ease to explain that Michael is the pre-incarnate Christ the great Prince and captain of the angelic host. I pointed to a few Bible verses, and read an article by Doug Batchelor about the subject, and about that time, I began to lose that sense of ease. You couldn’t help but detect that the essence of the article was strangely contradictory to the Trinitarian “proofs” we were recently taught. It seemed ridiculous to think that Michael (‘Who is like God’) is the very God. Here was a case of someone essentially saying that God is like Himself. Yet, I did not reveal that I found this very confusing and silly and wrong. I didn’t want to ruin anything for Dasha and I knew that I didn’t even begin to have answers to the questions that begged to be asked at that point.

Perhaps it was a few days later, when again Dasha wanted to have something else clarified. This time it was the Trinity. I confessed that it was beyond me to explain this teaching, but I remembered that Doug Batchelor’s website also listed something about the Trinity, so I suggested we find that article and read it. “We’ll see what he has to say...” Inwardly, I already expected it to be a flop.

So, I sat at the computer and read aloud, feeling somewhat silly for uttering such nonsense. He had used some analogies like the three states of water, and light in a prism, etc. He suggested that the prayers of Jesus were given to us as examples, He admitted that even, the great Christian scholars have struggled with this truth and it’s only natural for us to have difficulties too. I remember reading that a worm is more likely to understand a human being than a man the Triune

God. As I finished the article, I was angry. I felt like I had been duped, we had been long baptized into the name of foolery (even married in a church of foolery.) and I was sure of it now. I told my wife that I would need a little time before I could come to any conclusions about this topic. She was quiet; it seemed she was feeling the same thing. It was already late at night, and we went to bed.

My mind was occupied with all kinds of questions. Was Adventism a sham? Was Christianity a sham? Was the Bible a sham? Or was it just that Doug Batchelor and our local pastor were inadequate teachers? I knew that at least one of these was the case. I still trusted God - whoever He was - and knew that jumping to conclusions is often a great folly. I resolved in my head to approach this slowly and meticulously.

Truth begins to dawn

As Providence would have it, the next day was the beginning of a very lengthy winter break from college. I had all the time in the world to engage in a quest to find the truth about God. In starting, I prayed—oh, I remember the aching bewilderment in my heart!—I prayed that God Himself would lead me to the truth. I promised Him that I would desist from hearing man-made philosophies. I swore that I had made an end of placing man as the guide in my walk with Him. I was totally willing to submit to whatever He taught me through the word. I will explain to you how serious this was: I was fully resolved to abandon Adventism. I was even ready if the LORD should have made it clear to me, to renounce Christianity entirely and become a Jew or a Muslim. I was ready, because I knew that what I was living wasn't working out for me.

And yet, I Remembered the time that God had answered my first cry for help, and how He had answered many other prayers thereafter. I was impressed with a great feeling of comfort and assurance that this prayer would also be answered and I opened my Bible. In my heart of hearts, I knew there was no guile in it. I felt a great sense of freedom as I turned through the pages. I examined the prayers and statements of Jesus, and looked at what should be critical areas in any Trinity debate. Many of these passages I was already familiar with through the previous articles I had read to my wife. I thumbed around for a few hours. I remember feeling a great relief that the Bible was not as strange or mystical as these peoples' philosophies, it seemed very clear that Jesus' Father is the only God and that Jesus is not Him. I didn't feel I had everything untangled, "perhaps," I mused, "the truth would prove to be even stranger than fiction," but I was convinced that the Trinity was a fraud, and I believed that this realization was Heaven-sent.

Then I became curious; Why do Christians believe it? Why do *Adventists*? That was really bothering me. Everything else from the Adventist message seemed so clear and correct, especially the application of Bible prophecy, which seemed so practical and fit reality just right. I simply couldn't imagine it being wrong. I thought, "Just look at history, look at the Pope, you know that guy is the glove on the devil's hand." I was also an ardent believer in veganism. and was really impressed by the health message, seeing it as something Like a secondary mark of divine inspiration.

It seemed I had simply traded one perplexity for another. My wife was at work, I wanted to explain these thoughts to someone. I wondered, had I gone off the deep end? But then I again felt even surer that the Trinity wasn't the truth, it was a conviction I just couldn't shake, especially considering that all the known alternatives to this conviction were incomprehensible. I felt emboldened in my renunciation of the triune concept of God. I also remember fearing that the truth of the matter was going to be even harder to grasp, I thought it would be like rocket science, so I didn't let out any sigh of relief yet.

I wondered, "Who else has come to this conclusion?" So, I started up the computer and did some searching. I was also very curious about how this teaching got started. Well, as you are aware,

you can find everything on the internet. I was still very careful of my vow not to trust in man for answers, I was just interested in finding someone who understood my trial in all this—someone who wouldn't call me a heretic, with whom I could compare experiences. That's when I found the Restoration Ministries web site. It was amazing to me! I had been a Christian almost 5 years already, and for the first time, I was being convinced that Jesus is literally the only-begotten Son of the living God! It was wonderful and horrible at the same time! Horrible because I had been in the dark for so long! Wonderful for many reasons, as I shall explain shortly.

When my wife came home that day, I told her during dinner that I had renounced the Trinity. She immediately expressed great relief and revealed that she, too had been going through the same struggle, but was reluctant to say so for fear of saying some kind of heresy! It's amazing to see the spiritual bondage caused by the Trinitarian falsehood—it created a disconnection in my relationship with God and with my wife. I realized that we are only going to have a healthy marriage as long as we are properly walking with God.

There is something amazing about learning the truth about God and Jesus—it is the opening of the door to learn the truth about the *love* of God and His Son for me and you. This love is so great and deep and broad—it breaks the sinful and hard heart to know the God loves you and me so much, that he gave us His only begotten Son! This love is so true and profound—we do not deserve it. Here is the way I first responded to it: at first I could not consent to it because, through these years of life and learning, I had obtained a sense of decency, and I knew it was not right for me to accept this love—it would be a mockery of justice. My heart echoed the apostle's words, "depart from me oh Lord, for I am a sinful man..." bestow this love on better people. Who am I, just who am I? Yet at the same time, I could not escape the conviction that God wasn't just saying "I love them," but rather, "I love you, Chris," and I accepted it. My heart was overcome by this love, because the love of God is wholly unblemished by any spot of selfishness. He loves us, and from the perspective of such love, the transgressions, failures, and infidelities of our past are not considered. If we steadfastly behold such love and such unselfish character, we will be restored to the image of God.

In writing this letter, I wanted you to know the wonderful blessings I have received. I feel it's a privilege to have read your many beautiful and inspired discourses on the love of God and I want to express sincere appreciation for it.

Since the time I have given my heart to know the truth about God, starting a half a year ago, I have experienced more growth, happiness, contentment, and blessings than ever before. Finally God is close to me, He is personal, He loves me—always! My life has changed so much since realizing this. Now, for the first time in my life, I really love God and Jesus, it even comes normally in my prayers. The Bible has come to life for me, and it seems as if I have memorized massive portions of it in matter of days. The interesting thing is, this is not the result of "magic" but the result of these passages bursting into significance and being etched into my heart and mind.

This is the new covenant: when we begin to understand the infinite love of God revealed in the gift of His Son, we will have the law put in our inward parts and written in our hearts, and the Lord will be our God, and we will be His people. This greatest love is the only remedy for the sin-sick heart, it is the only argument that can truly convert a soul.

The Gospel of Christ "is the power of God unto salvation." I just love to tell people about it—not considering myself a minister, or any such thing just a man who loves God and Jesus and the good News.

Did you know, that in nearly 5 years of Adventism (and various other churches) all over America and the whole world, I have never heard a single sermon on the love of God? No, not once. Isn't

that astounding!?! It's always about striving to sinlessness, about family-repair, about devotion-repair; where is the "power of God unto salvation?" It's not there!

They just mull over the same old problems and the medicine is right there in front of them, yet sadly out of reach because in order to appreciate it, they must first reject their cherished creed of trinitarianism. As long as this continues, the SDA Church will remain impotent.

The Parents' Duty

Are parents placing the mark of God upon their households in this their day of probation and privilege? Are not many fathers and mothers placing their responsibilities into others' hands? Do not many of them think that the minister should take the burden, and see to it that their children are converted, and that the seal of God is placed upon them? They do not restrict their children's desires, referring them to a "thus saith the Lord." Many suppose that the Sabbath-school influence will be all-sufficient, and that the Sabbath-school teacher will instruct and educate their children in such a way as to lead them to Christ. Fathers and mothers place their responsibility in the hands of others, and thus perilously neglect their own households. {RH, May 21, 1895}

THE DIVINITY OF JESUS CHRIST

Martin Eldon (contributed by Wilbur Hargreaves)

Jesus Christ is the Divine Son of the Living GOD. He was born before all creation from the being of the Father. He was equal to the Father in nature and substance.

There are some in 'Christendom' today, who deny the divinity of Jesus Christ; some teach that Christ pre-existed as a created angel; others teach that the 'impersonal' Word, or Message, from God lived inside the man named Jesus.

Let's read the first two verses of John and see what he tells us about the Word:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with (the)God, and the Word was God (Divine). 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 1:1-2

John tells us that this Word, that was with GOD in the beginning of time, is not an impersonal 'message,' but is a personal being; he is called Him. God created all things by (through) this person called the Word. Also note that John is not saying that the "Word" was a god; but he was God. He has the very nature of the ONE He was with. As we read further, and look at other verses concerning this issue, we will see that ALL things were created through Christ Jesus. This will place the origin of Christ before all creation. As he existed before creation, then as we will see, He had to be of the Substance of GOD, since the Substance of GOD was the only Substance in existence before creation! Truly, Christ is of the same nature and substance of His Father, as every human being possesses the same nature of his parents, and is from their substance.

Why is this person called *the Word*? The words reveal the thoughts of one's heart. Jesus reveals the heart of the Father to us. He has always done that. He is the visible image, of the invisible God.

How does Paul say everything has come into existence?

"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 Bible teaches that "the Father is the source of all things; all things are of him, and it teaches that Jesus is the instrument or channel, through which all things were made."

WHEN WAS CHRIST BEGOTTEN?

"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. Colossians 1:15-16:

Here Jesus is declared to be the Firstborn of every creature. What does this phrase mean? Firstborn is translated from the Greek word, protokos, and it simply means: first-born, —first begotten.

Thus we see in these verses that Paul is telling us that Christ was 'Begotten first, or Born before all creation', because all of creation was created by God through Christ. (See Ephesians 3:9).

This is also the explanation given to us concerning this verse in the Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon: "Christ is called, firstborn of all creation, who came into being through God, prior to the entire universe of created things".

Wigram's Greek Lexicon tells us the following: "Or it may be; born before all creation".

Jamieson, Faussett and Brown Bible Commentary has this to add: " Translate, "Begotten (literally, 'born') before every creature," as the context shows, which gives the reason why He is so designated. "For," &c. (Col. 1:16-17).

Matthew Henry's Commentary states the following: "He was born or begotten before all the creation, before any creature was made;"

"Who is the image of the unseen God coming into existence before all living things;" (BBE)

"Now Christ is the visible expression of the invisible God. He was born before creation began," (PHIL)

Was Jesus begotten before he came to the earth? "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

Now I want us to "THINK" a little. God tells us to come and reason with HIM. The Bible teaches that Christ existed with the Father before all creation, and was actually the channel by which God created all things.

This means that Christ is not a "Creature", because He pre-existed all creation! Now a "Creature" is something whose substance was brought forth from NOTHING. Humans are creatures because we are made of dirt, and dirt was created from nothing. Everything we see in this world is a part of creation.

Christ is not a creature; He wasn't brought forth from nothing, so where did He come from? The Bible clearly teaches that He was begotten before creation; so where did He come from?

There is but one place He could have come from, and that is the substance of GOD. He was begotten from GOD before all creation. As Children are brought forth from the substance of their parents, Christ was brought forth from the substance of His Father.

For example when my wife gave birth to my daughter, she didn't give birth to a 'foreign' substance. Stacy was made up of the same material as her Mother. They were both of the same flesh and bone. When God brought forth HIS Son from HIS bosom, He had to be of the same substance as His Father.

THE DIVINE NATURE OF CHRIST

Now let's read John 1:1 again: *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."*(Divine)

John is not telling us that the Word was the same person as "The God" He was with; and He is not saying that the Word was 'a god', as some sort of Ruler, or mighty man; but John is telling us that the Word, the pre-existent Son, had the very nature of GOD. He is truly Divine, or God,-by nature!

The Bible teaches ever so clearly that Jesus Christ pre-existed as the Divine Son of GOD, and shared in the glory and riches of GOD; but He emptied Himself of this glory, and these riches, and became a man, - the poorest of the poor!

"Let the same disposition be in you which was in Christ Jesus. Although from the beginning, He had the nature of God, He did not reckon His equality with God a treasure to be tightly grasped. Nay, He stripped Himself of His glory, and took on Him the nature of a bondservant, by becoming a man like other men. And being recognized as truly human, He humbled Himself and even stooped to die; yes, to die on a cross." Philippians 2:5-8 (WEYMOUTH)

Again, I will use the example of my wife and daughter. When my wife gave birth to Stacy, what other nature could she possess? She couldn't have been a kangaroo, or a whale; but Stacy had to be a human. She had to be born with the same NATURE as her parents! Like begets like. So when GOD brought forth HIS Son, HIS Son could only have one and the same nature, and that is the nature of GOD.

"For it is in Christ that the fulness of God's nature dwells embodied, and in Him you are made complete." Colossians 2:9 (WEYMOUTH)

When GOD brought forth HIS Son, HE brought Him from HIS SUBSTANCE, and with HIS very NATURE; in fact the fulness of HIS nature! (See Colossians 1:19)

Again, I want you to look at my wife and daughter; which one of them is "more" human? They are both equally human; they have the same nature. Just because my daughter was begotten from her mother, doesn't make her any less human than her mother! Christ has the same nature as His Father; thus, by nature, He is equal to His Father! Christ is from the very substance of GOD, and thus He is equal to His Father in substance.

BUT THE FATHER IS 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

Since the Father and Son are equal in substance and nature, then why is the Father "greater" than the Son?

Now again, look at my wife and Stacy. Though they are equally human, who is greater? In most ways my wife is greater. For example, my wife is greater in age, in stature, in strength, and in authority. Yet they are both equally human.

For another example, who is greater, men or women, the man or wife?

“Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.” 1 Peter 3:7

Though men and women share the same nature, and consist of the same substance, and in this sense are considered equal; yet man is the stronger vessel. Man has been given authority to rule his household. The same example is given for Christ and GOD.

“But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.” 1 Corinthians 11:3

Because Christ’s life, substance, nature, power and authority are all derived from the being of the Father, Christ recognizes the Supremacy of the Father and honors the Father as His LORD and GOD. He submits happily to the will of the Father.

The Father isn’t greater in Substance or Nature, but HE is of greater authority and HE is unbegotten and the SOURCE of all things!

CHRIST IS FROM ETERNITY

“But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though 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.” Micah 5:2

Here Micah tells us that Jesus Christ’s origin (goings forth – see ‘Brown Driver and Briggs Hebrew Lexicon. The RSV, the GW, and other translations) is from everlasting or eternity. .

The Septuagint literally reads: Whose “arche (beginning) ek (is from) hemera (the days) aion (of eternity).”

As we have read, Christ Jesus existed with God before all creation, and here we are told that His origin is found in eternity. Let me attempt to explain this:

When the bible speaks about ‘eternity past’, it means before temporal time. Time, as we know it, is temporal; it is all based upon the physical attributes of creation. We base our years on the circuit the earth takes around the sun. The months are based on the circuit of the moon around the earth. The 24-hour days are based on the one rotation of the earth on its own axis. Temporal time began at creation.

Christ was born before temporal time, and thus His ‘origin’ is in, or from, eternity.

THE ETERNAL, BEGOTTEN SON

Why are all men subject to death?

“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” 1st Corinthians 15:22

When Adam sinned, and became subject to death, all of his posterity, all that would spring from his loins would also be subject to death; because all of mankind was virtually in his loins.

Where was Levi before he was born?

“And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.” Hebrews 7:9-10

Levi, did not actually exist then; but he did, virtually, in the loins of his great grand-parent. Genetically, all mankind existed in Adam, as Levi existed in Abraham.

What is Christ called in Corinthians 1:24?

“But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.”

Here Christ is called the Wisdom of GOD; Wisdom originates in the heart (mind). God’s wisdom originates in HIS heart also.

In other places Jesus is called the Word of GOD. A person’s word is his thoughts- “revealed!” Christ the Word, is the revealed thoughts or Wisdom of GOD.

“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

“For the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from GOD.” John 16:27

While studying some of the writings of the pre-nicean church “fathers,” I noticed that they repeatedly quoted the following verses to prove that Christ was indeed “begotten.” The true meaning of these verses are almost lost today, because of the sloppy modern translations.

“For the end, for alternate strains by the sons of Core; for instruction, a Song concerning the beloved. My heart has uttered an excellent word (logos)... PSALMS 45:1-6 (LXX)

Isn’t it an awesome thought, to think that Jesus existed in the heart of GOD as HIS ‘wisdom’; and before creation, He was ‘made audible’ and thus begotten, as a true Son,- not a sound without substance; a true Being, with His own intellect! The next few verses of this Psalm clears up any question concerning who the speaker has in mind. (See Psalm 45:2-5)

L. Martin in his book, “100 and more mysteries about the trinity”, explains the eternity of Christ this way:

“It is a fact that a person may exist and yet have no conscious awareness or any visible appearance. This is true of all human beings who pre-existed genetically in their immediate parents and even in Adam, just as Levi pre-existed in Abraham (Heb. 7:9)... This raises the question: Couldn’t it be possible that in some mysterious sense beyond the comprehension of finite human beings, Christ pre-existed as a Person immanent within the Father’s bosom and was subsequently begotten as the mono-genes? The Apostolic Fathers, who lived nearest to the New Testament writers, who knew them and heard them speak, saw no tension in the paradox of the eternity of Christ and the fact that He was the literal begotten Son of God the Father. They simply believed that Christ pre-existed as the [Wisdom] of the Father, Who was made audible (begotten) as the Word, an independent [person] without leaving the Father empty of HIS mind. This was the explanation widely held by those who lived in a period when the church received a glowing commendation from the Savior (Rev. 2:9); a period when the church was not torn by unending theological controversies, divisions, wars and deceptious schemes.” (*100 and more mysteries about the Trinity.*)

Let me share with you this example, which should make this more understandable. For nine9 months, my wife carried Stacy in her womb. Was Stacy a person while she was in her womb? Yes, she definitely was! Yet, she didn’t become a distinct/visible person until she was born.

If the Son existed within the heart of GOD as Wisdom, then Christ is eternal because GOD has never been without wisdom. And then, when God spoke, the Wisdom became the Word, and the Son was born.

So we see why it is Biblical to believe:

The Son is of the Substance of the Father, and has the Nature of the Father. Thus, He is equal in person to the Father; though the Father is greater in power and authority.

The Son, though begotten from the Father, has existed with the Father, from eternity.

The Work in
Jamaica



[Ramble, St. James](#)

For several years there have been no regular meetings in St. James although there have been several believers in the Montego Bay area, remnants of the group which once met at Copper. Recently, however, Brother Gordon moved to Ramble where he has a home with ample room to hold small meetings. Since then the brethren have been meeting fairly regularly and so we can happily say that the light has not been extinguished in St. James. Let us pray for this little group that it may continue to be a witness to the truth in that parish.

[Frome, Westmoreland](#)

The group in Westmoreland was formed as a result of advertisements which were aired on TV, where we advertised free materials on the subject of the Mark of The Beast. As a result of these ads, several ladies in the Grange Hill area of Westmoreland contacted us and after some dialogue eagerly accepted the message. Up to that time these ladies had been attending a pentecostal church. From this nucleus a small company was started in Westmoreland at Frome and the believers met for Sabbath worship, first in the home of a sister, and then later in a basic school building. These believers were babes in the faith and every Sabbath they needed somebody to feed and to teach them. It was a long drive for those who came from as far as Mandeville and Montego Bay but we tried to be there as often as possible. Recent developments in Westmoreland have caused us a lot of distress. Domestic problems in the families of several of the believers have erupted suddenly which have resulted in them being unable to continue attending meetings. In more than one case the people involved had to leave home and in one case one of the sisters had her life threatened. We do not know what will happen from this point on. At the moment meetings have been suspended in Westmoreland and we ask that all who love the Lord and His truth should pray for these believers.

[Kingston](#)

The group in Kingston has been around for several years. First the brethren used to meet at Hope Gardens, but for the past couple of years they have been meeting at the Priory School premises on

Hope Road in Kingston. Some time ago they adopted the name of "Philadelphia Fellowship." Existing in the Largest city in the island, and in an area with a heavy Seventh day Adventist population, this group has undertaken several projects including several tract drives where thousands of pieces of literature have been distributed. The latest project being undertaken by this group is the establishment of a website. Hopefully this will soon be ready and available as another source of truth filled materials to assist believers around the world in the struggle to defend the truth and overturn error.

Hayes, Clarendon

The group in Hayes is a small one, but they have been standing faithfully for the truth from the beginning of the movement to restore the truth about God in Jamaica. One of the leading figures in this group is Sister Bev Walters. She established this church in her home, and has recently erected a small structure in the front of her yard where the brethren now meet on Sabbaths. This has been a vibrant fellowship, and one where visitors were always made to feel at home. Recently they have been seriously depleted with the migration of Brother Darlston (Orlie) Clayton to the USA and Wayne and Lorraine (Nikki) Sutherland to England. These brethren contributed significantly to the fellowship and their going has left a gap in the group. However, those who are left are still doing their best to stand faithfully for the truth.

Duncans, Trelawny

The Duncans group is a small one and a fairly recent addition to the number of those who believe the truth about God in Jamaica. It started a little over two years ago with a group of seven brethren who took a stand for the truth in the SDA church at Duncans and who eventually came to the conclusion that the opposition to the truth was so fierce there, that they had no option but to leave and start a home church. Despite the fact that they are few in numbers these brethren are zealous for the truth and are always seeking for ways and means by which they can share with others. Since the beginning of the group several new members have been added to the fellowship.

Albion, Manchester

This is the oldest and the largest group in the island with a fellowship of approximately fifty believers. This group has existed as an independent fellowship since 1985 and has recently built a small wooden chapel where meetings are now kept. This church being stronger and older than the others has assisted in nurturing some of the newer and smaller groups such as Hayes, Frome and Duncans. This group also forms the nucleus from which Restoration Ministries was established.

Some of the projects in which Albion has been involved over the years include island-wide tract distribution drives, evangelistic meetings, a radio program which was aired for two years, Newspaper and television advertisements which resulted in many people coming to know and accept the truth.

Recent developments in this group include the establishment of a young people's forum on Sabbath afternoons where they are able to meet, discuss and to air their views on several issues which are of concern to them. A steady choir has also been established in this group which has embellished the worship services on Sabbaths and other special occasions.

Southfield, St. Elizabeth

The group in Southfield is the youngest of all the groups and is just a little over a year old. The establishment of this group is largely due to the efforts of Sister Zemrie McGlashan who has been determined for a long time that there should be a witness to the

truth in Southfield. Providentially she was able to obtain a place for worship, a building which was actually designed as a church, but which had fallen into disuse. After some refurbishing and minor repairs the small fellowship has made this chapel their home and have established a vibrant witness in the community. There are plans to have a series of evangelistic meetings there soon.

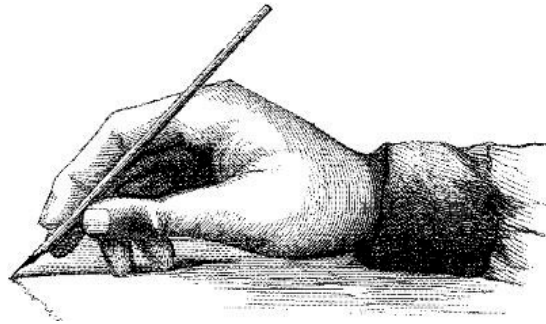
Why Didn't She Make it Plain?

One of the questions which puzzles many people who have studied the issue of the nature of the godhead, is the question as to why Ellen White did not explain the nature of the godhead so clearly that there would have been no room for debate, no question as to what she really believed.

Her fellow pioneers, in contrast, people like J.N. Loughborough, J.N. Andrews, and even her husband James White very clearly and unambiguously condemned the doctrine of the Trinity in plain and strong language. Nobody can be uncertain as to where they stood on this question. Ellen White, however, never even once used the word "Trinity" in all her writings and has left room for uncertainty as to where she really stood on the issue. Why is this so?

This is difficult to understand until we carefully consider the nature of Ellen White's writings as opposed to the writings of her peers. All the other Adventists pioneers wrote on the basis of their study of the Bible, their understanding of truth based on their intellectual and spiritual capacity. What they wrote was their own conclusion, guided as they believed, by the holy spirit. For the most part they were men of deep thought and their writings testify to the fact that they were possessed of strong intellectual power.

Ellen White, on the other hand, did not write on the basis of her own understanding most of the time. Her statements were not made on the basis of her own intellectual power. She claimed all her life that she was a "messenger of the Lord," and it was on that basis and from that foundation that her writings were produced. In other words, Ellen White is not responsible for the seeming inconclusiveness in her writings. The person responsible for this is God. Is this a reasonable conclusion?



The Bible has many teachings which establish a principle of the way God works, supportive of the idea which I just presented. Why is it that God permitted statements to be placed in the Bible which could be misconstrued to teach the doctrine of the immortality of the soul and the eternal punishment of the wicked? (*Isa 66:24; Rev 14:11*) Why is it that God did not name the Pope as the antichrist in the same way that He named Cyrus as the deliverer of Israel 100 years before he was born? (*Isa 45:1*) Why is it that He did not repeat the Sabbath commandment plainly in the New Testament so that there would have been no place for Sunday observers to find an excuse? Why is it that He did not plainly specify that the Messiah was first to die, betrayed and rejected by the Jewish leaders and then later to return as a conquering King? There are dozens of questions like this; many areas of controversy where it seems that it would have been so much simpler if God had not left any room for doubt. How we often wish to find some piece of evidence so plain, so incontrovertible that all argument will be stopped and everyone be compelled to acknowledge the truth.

God does not work in this way. Truth must be received with an honest and willing heart. There is not much virtue in a person acknowledging the truth only because he has no option. Such an acceptance of truth will not produce willing and wholehearted obedience. The reception of truth which is worth something is that which is based on honest and earnest searching of the word of God. It is based on fair and unbiased comparing of Scripture and the careful examination of ideas

with a heart willing and ready to submit to the guidance of God's spirit, wherever that spirit leads. For this reason, testing truth has always been plain enough for the honest in heart, but vague enough for those who do not love the truth to find a place on which to hang their doubts and embrace falsehood.

Ellen White wrote what was revealed to her. She really was not the most qualified to give a Bible study on the subject of the godhead. Her claim to being an authority was on the basis of what God said to her, and on the question of the godhead it is plain that once again, God has left room for those who wish to take the popular, safe side, to find room for rejecting the truth and embracing error.

Update on the work in India

Howard Williams

In March 2003, Lynnford Beachy of Smyrna Gospel Ministries and I made a trip to India to share The Truth About God.

The brethren who hosted this trip were few in number, but were already introduced to the message through printed literature and personal email contact.

Our visit was mostly to the southern part of India, namely the state of Tamil Nadu. Since our visit we have kept in touch with the work and though things started out more slowly than expected, the work has been making steady progress there.



Brother, Dharma Suresh Kumar, who was present at the first meeting, has taken the time to carefully examine the materials we took along with us for distribution. Today he is convinced of the truth and is doing his best with the little means he has to spread this truth. A few months ago we were delighted when he sent us translated copies of some of our tracts in his native tongue, Tamil.

Brother Suresh is a diligent worker who loves the truth and he has been photocopying these tracts from his little salary, in order to share with others.

We recently sent him some help which he used to translate and reproduce David Clayton's book, "The Mystery De-mystified."

The book is an edited version, which means he has just chosen the most important chapters to print, since the entire book would have cost too much.

There are others in his area who have accepted the truth and who are now joining with him in the spread of the truth.

There are also other brethren in different areas of the South who were also present at the meetings we had and they are spreading the word of truth through personal witnessing as well. We had a recent report that nineteen (19) persons have been baptized into the truth..

We are doing our best to get the brethren to work together in a more united way. The uniting would include sharing literature and witnessing materials.

We solicit your prayers for these precious brethren who have to work under very difficult circumstances, living, as they are, in a country heavily influenced by the Hindu religion which threatens any rival with death.

. . . AND AROUND

THE WORLD

The brethren in Europe have continued to move aggressively forward in proclaiming the truth about God and His Son, in the face of stiff and hostile opposition. By the time you receive this newsletter they will be holding campmeetings. These campmeetings are vital in that they help people to recognize that they are not alone in the struggle, they help to clarify issues and they serve as a means of unifying those who hold to the truth.

It is important that those who believe and love the Lord should continue to pray for these brethren and their work. Reports also out of Romania show us that the work there is also progressing steadily. In fact, there are daily reports of earnest efforts and advances being made through sacrificial effort everywhere. In South Africa, brother Onward Makeche and others have been travelling from place to place holding meetings and sharing the truth with people. In Tanzania, in addition to the work being done by brother (Pastor) Kitomari in translation, we also receive reports from brother (Pastor) Patrick Katambo of great potential in his area and of the interest in the truth being shown there.

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From Australia

Dear David,

I hope this letter finds you in good health and strong in the Lord. I've just received your newsletter and have enjoyed reading it.

After the first term break of college. I returned to school and shared my new conviction about the doctrine of God. In the meeting with the three directors and teacher of the school, I was surprised to see how strongly they opposed my views. They didn't have clear evidence (Bible or Spirit of Prophecy) to change my views and were not convincing in their response to my questions. These guys are Hartland graduates. I realized then how weak their stand is and this strengthened my conviction. Unfortunately, we could not agree. I was told that it would be hard for me to stay at school with my views. So I replied quickly and said "it's o.k., I'll leave."

I packed up that afternoon. Although I was sad at the time, it wasn't long before I realized that God may not have wanted me there now. Since leaving all my spare time has been spent studying this doctrine and its been a blessing.

Bill and another friend and I are starting our own ministry. We have a group of about twelve (12) believers and its growing. We have regular bible studies on Sabbath afternoons and are sharing with many other friends, some long standing Adventists.

We have also had long meetings with two separate self-supporting ministries which we were supporting. But unfortunately, they not only are resisting the message, but one now seems to be mounting attacks against us. We admire their zeal and conviction for what they believe, but are sad that so far God isn't able to bestow the blessings that this truth brings.

We've come across one strain of Trinitarianism, which says that because God says His Son is begotten of Him (pre-incar) we need to believe this, even if He isn't really begotten literally. "He is begotten, without being Begotten." We can't accept this as it was put to us, even though we were given examples of this being a biblical principle – "sounds strange."

Your tape of the month sounds like it could be good for our study group. If you could send us one I'll make copies and share it around. Also, if you should have any other tapes or literature which you feel might help us in sharing the truth and also the errors of the Trinity, I will make copies and put them to good use.

We already have, "The Foundation of Our Faith" by A.S. and your book "Telling The Truth About God."

Now that we know what our purpose is for God, we'll accept all that comes our way. We pray for God's strength every day, without which we know we would be doomed.

We have you and Allen in our prayers always and all your team and supporters. May God continue to bless you all abundantly.

Christian regards,

Your Brother

TRANSLATING THE TRUTH IN AFRICA

The work of translating the literature is going forward in many different countries and we have here included samples of translations done by brother K. Kitomari in Tanzania, and brother Mafo Chinyemba in Zambia.

Below is a portion of the booklet, "The Omega of Apostasy," translated into the Kiswahili language by brother K. Kitomari of Tanzania. Brother Kitomari has translated several other books including "From Babylon to New Jerusalem," by A.T. Jones and "This is The Church" as well as, "A Time To Choose." Some of these books have not yet been published because Brother Kitomari is hampered by a lack of funds.

"Ellen White aliandika habari za uasi miongoni mwa watu wa Mungu wa siku za mwisho. Maelezo maalum yanayoelezea Mwanzo wa (ALFA) na mwisho (OMEGA) ya uasi. Ellen White alitamka kua katika kitabu kinachoitwa – The living Temple, kilichoandikwa habari za afya na John Harvey Kellog katika kitabu hicho kulikuwa na mafundisho ambayo ni mwanzo wa uasi. Faida iliyopatikana kutokana na mauzo ya kitabu hicho ilikusudiwa kutumika kujenga upya Sanitarium iliyoungwa kwa moto huko Bettle Creek. Wakati wote walikubaliana sehemu za kitabu kilichoeleza habari za afya kwa undani ilikuwa ni nzuri na yenye kufaa kupelekewa watu, Dr. Kellog alifungamanisha mafundisho ya uongo kuhusu Mungu katika kitabu hicho. Mafundisho hayo ni ya aina yenye kueleza kwa Mungu yuko mahali pote."

Here also is an extract from the tract, "The God of The Bible," Translated into the Bemba language (Zambia) by brother Chinyemba Mafo.

"Tuto ye ya Bibelet i ambola ka taba ye nyunga maikuto. Buñata bwa batu ba ikolwisisize ka se ba lumezi, ni haku fumaneha litumelo ze ñata ze itwanisa ku a mana ni seo Mulimu ali sona. Zeñwi za litumelo ze, libile teñi hala lilimo ze ñata, mi lilumezwi ki ba bañata. Nihakulicwalo, litumelo ze hali konahali kuba za niti kaufela zona. Kono he buñata bwa sicaba, aba tabeli ku

batisisa kamba ku teleleza nto ifi kamba ifi ye sa lumelalani ni sizo seba amuhezi kwa likeleke za bona kamba ku bokukwa bona.”

Youth For God

Youth For God is a website dedicated to helping youth gain a closer walk with Christ through a Christian atmosphere. It is a place where Christian youth can come together and interact with other Christian youth to gain a deeper knowledge of God and a place to be able to just talk with other like minded youth in a relaxed setting and at a time that is convenient for them.

Hi, my name is Jonathon. I am 18, live in a valley nestled among the sublime mountains of Northern California, and I'm the founder of Youth For God.

And I am Jani, age 19, the administrative assistant of Youth For God, and I'm from beautiful northeastern Washington.

Youth For God was started in 2000 as an Ez-Board. It has undergone many changes since its beginning , and we are continually working to improve it. One of the biggest changes was creating our own website, and making Youth For God ad free. Youth For God's website now has several departments: Bible Studies (continually being updated); and a friendly and active message board, which includes many different topics. You'll be sure to find something you will enjoy there. For those of you that use the Young Disciple lessons, there are two Young Disciple forums- one is a place for us to discuss the lessons, and the other is for everything else relating to Young Disciple Magazine. There is also a live chat room where the members can visit together.

Youth for God welcomes new members. To join, log on to "<http://www.youthforgod.net/forum>" and complete the registration form, or if you just want to browse Youth For God, go to our homepage at www.youthforgod.net. And don't forget to sign the guestbook.

This is a site designed for the youth, but those of all ages are welcome.

"The greatest want of the world is the want of men, men who will not be bought or sold; men who in their inmost souls are true and honest; men who do not fear to call sin by its right name; men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole; men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall."

See you in Cyberspace!

The Youth For God Team

Open Face

Manchester, Jamaica W.I.

July 2004

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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