

# THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY: CONVERSATIONS · CLARIFICATIONS

“His Church must be kept free from all false doctrine” (Ms 46, 1905 par. 6)

by Ingo Sorke, PhD · Appeal to the Remnant

## 1872 FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES - PREAMBLE

## Sola Scriptura · No Creed

“In presenting to the public this synopsis of our faith, we wish to have it distinctly understood that we have no articles of faith, creed, or discipline, aside from the Bible. We do not put forth this as having any authority with our people, nor is it designed to secure uniformity among them, as a system of faith, but is a brief statement of what is, and has been, with great unanimity, held by them.” [My Key Texts: Jn 17:3; Rom 15:6; 1Cor 8:4-6; 11:3; Eph 4:4-6,13; 1Thess 1:9-10; 1Tim 2:5; 2Jn 3; Rev 3:12]

## FUNDAMENTAL BELIEF #2

Trinity ≠ Godhead ≠ Trio

^ non-biblical definition of God! ^

God: 3 = 1 = 3?! ⚡ not supported by Bible texts! ↘

**2. The Trinity ... There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit**, a unity of three coeternal Persons. **God is** immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, above all, and ever present. **He is** infinite and beyond human comprehension, yet known through **His** self-revelation. (Gen 1:26; Deut 6:4; Isa 6:8; Mt 28:19; Jn 3:16; 2 Cor 1:21, 22; 13:14; Eph 4:4-6; 1 Pet 1:2.)

## MONOTHEISM & THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST

## Is Jesus part of the Shema?

The Jewish understanding of God can be summed up in one word: monotheism. There is one God. Period.

**Deut 4:35** “To you it was shown, that you might know that the LORD Himself is God; there is none other besides Him.”

**Isa 45:5** “I am the LORD, and there is no other; there is no God besides Me.”

Accordingly, *God the Creator belongs to one area of reality; creation to another - but what about Jesus?!*

Creator (God)	↑ Jesus ↓	<b>The Bauckham Proposal:</b> Integrating 1 Cor 8:6 with Deut 6:4 ( <i>the Shema</i> ), where Jesus becomes part of the monotheism of the <i>Shema</i> : “Hear, O Israel: The <b>LORD</b> our <b>God</b> , the <b>LORD</b> is <b>one</b> ! (Deut 6:4)
Creation (Creature)		

**1Cor 8:4-6** “Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol *is* nothing in the world, and that *there is* no other **God** but **one**. 5 For even if there are so-called **gods**, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many **gods** and many **lords**), 6 yet for us *there is one God*, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we for Him; and **one Lord** Jesus Christ, through whom *are* all things, and through whom we *live*.”

**But Paul preserves the monotheism of the Shema:** the Father = the “one God”. He then adds “the Lord Jesus Christ” in the sense of A + B, not B ∈ A (ε = x is part of y) - *read 1 Cor 8:6 yourself!* Strictly speaking Deut 6:4 LORD = יהוה YHWH - a proper name, *not* a title: “Jehovah (is) our God, Jehovah (is) one.” Jesus Himself affirms this highest confession of the Hebrew faith (Mk 12:28-34), which will be declared again in the end time: “And the LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be—“**The LORD is one,**” and **His name one**” (Zech 14:9).

**Father and Son “are one in purpose, in mind, in character, but not in person. It is thus that God and Christ are one” (MH 422).**

## THE SONSHIP OF CHRIST - THE CORE OF THE CONFLICT

## The Cause of the Great Controversy!

*In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him” (1 John 4:9).*

“When Christ first announced to the heavenly host His mission and work in the world, He declared that He was to leave His position of dignity and disguise His holy mission by assuming the likeness of a man, **when in reality He was the Son of the infinite God**” (Lt 303, 1903) = *literal Sonship in Heaven, before Bethlehem!*

**“Christ was the only begotten Son of God, and Lucifer, that glorious angel, got up a warfare over the matter, until he had to be thrust down to the earth” (Ms 86, Aug. 21, 1910).**

“Satan was well acquainted **with the position of honor Christ had held in Heaven as the Son of God**, the beloved of the Father” (RH March 3, 1874).

“This fact the [fallen] angels would obscure, that **Christ was the only begotten Son of God**” (Lt 42, 1910). The other angels “clearly set forth that Christ was the Son of God, existing with Him before the angels were created” (SR 15).

**DA 530: “In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived.** “He that hath the Son hath life.” 1 John 5:12. **The divinity of Christ is the believer’s assurance of eternal life.** . . . He who Himself was soon to die upon the cross stood with the keys of death, a conqueror of the grave, **and asserted His right and power to give eternal life.**”

- “**The Father’s life flows out to all; through the Son it returns**” (DA 21).
- “**For a the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself**” (John 5:26).

“I feel my spirit stirred within me. I feel to the depth of my being that the truth must be borne to other countries and nations and to all classes. **Let the missionaries of the cross proclaim that there is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, who is Jesus Christ the Son of the Infinite God. This needs to be proclaimed throughout every church in our land**”

(Ms40-1891.78; Ellen White 1888 Materials 886.3).

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς  
 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with

Contrast: divine nature ↔ human nature

with article  
 τὸν Θεόν,  
**God,**  
 ↑  
 the Father  
 Person

no article                      with article  
**καὶ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος**  
**and the Word was God.”**  
 ↑  
 not the Father  
 Quality: Divine

“The Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father, is truly God in infinity, **but not in personality**” (Ms116-1905.19).

“There is a personal God, the Father; There is a personal Christ, the Son” (SDABC 6:1068; RH Nov 8, 1898).

🔴 You are “not definitely clear on the personality of God which is everything to us as a people. You have virtually destroyed the Lord God Himself” (Lt300-1903; RH Mar 8 1906 par. 19). “A denial of the personality of God...take[s] away the vital principles which have made us a separate people” (Ms8, 1914). *Identity Crisis!*

**NET Bible Note: Or “and what God was the Word was.”** ... Colwell’s Rule did not deal with a third possibility, that the anarthrous predicate noun may have more of a qualitative nuance when placed ahead of the verb. A definite meaning for the term is reflected in the traditional rendering “the word was God.” From a technical standpoint, though, it is preferable to see a qualitative aspect to anarthrous θεός in John 1:1c (ExSyn 266-69). Translations like the NEB, REB, and Moffatt are helpful in capturing the sense in John 1:1c, that the Word was fully deity in essence (just as much God as God the Father). ... The translation “what God was the Word was” is perhaps the most nuanced rendering, conveying that everything God was in essence, the Word was too. This points to unity of essence between the Father and the Son without equating the persons. However, in surveying a number of native speakers of English, some of whom had formal theological training and some of whom did not, the editors concluded that the fine distinctions indicated by “what God was the Word was” would not be understood by many contemporary readers. Thus the translation “the Word was fully God” was chosen because it is more likely to convey the meaning to the average English reader that the Logos (which “became flesh and took up residence among us” in John 1:14 and is thereafter identified in the Fourth Gospel as Jesus) is one in essence with God the Father. The previous phrase, “the Word was with God,” shows that the Logos is distinct in person from God the Father. ... And the Word was fully God. John’s theology consistently drives toward the conclusion that Jesus, the incarnate Word, is just as much God as God the Father. This can be seen, for example, in texts like John 10:30 (“The Father and I are one”), 17:11 (“so that they may be one just as we are one”), and 8:58 (“before Abraham came into existence, I am”). The construction in John 1:1c does not equate the Word with the person of God (this is ruled out by 1:1b, “the Word was with God”); rather it affirms that the Word and God are one in essence.

## PROMISE & PERSPECTIVE

“to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints” (Jude 3)

## Reality Check

⚠️ **GC President Neal C. Wilson** introducing the 27 Fundamental Beliefs to the GC delegates in Dallas (1980):

(<https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH19800423-V157-20.pdf>)

“There are others who think they know why this is being done. They believe it is being prepared as a club to batter someone over the head, to try to get people into a narrow concept of theology, not leaving any opportunity for individual interpretation of prophecy, or any individual views with respect to theology or certain areas of doctrine. This also is unfortunate, because this never has been and is not the intention of any study that has been given to the Statement on Fundamental Beliefs. **Some academicians, theologians, and others have expressed the fear that this statement was being developed so that the church could confront them with a checklist to determine whether they should be disqualified from teaching in one of our institutions of higher education. It is very, very tragic when these kinds of rumors begin to develop.**”

⚠️ **Issues: The Seventh-day Adventist Church and Certain Private Ministries (1977), p. 50**

“If Adventism is to meet the needs of all people around the world, the landmarks must remain simple and straightforward. The Bible will be our only creed. **Complex theological definitions, the Trinity, for example, may serve the church well in general but cannot be imposed as a test for all Adventists everywhere.** Adventism can expect fresh insights into truth, 'present truth' that will enhance the appreciation of old landmarks. Such an expectation has always been a part of historic Adventism and is reaffirmed in the Statement of Fundamental Beliefs voted in 1980. **When 'present truth' is of a complex nature, however, it may be more helpful for some in the church than for others. In such a case it cannot be imposed on the church as a whole. Remembering our non-Trinitarian past as well as the simplicity of our landmarks should encourage a certain humility in the church and lead us to resist any attempt by one segment of the church to impose its views on the rest.**”

**That which the Holy Spirit testified to as truth after the passing of the time ... is the solid foundation of truth. [The] pillars of truth were revealed, and we accepted the foundation principles that have made us what we are - Seventh-day Adventists, keeping the commandments of God and having the faith of Jesus” (Lt 326-1905.3; Ms111-1905.4: “the essential points of truth”).**

“Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, 6 that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 15:5-6).