

TURNING POINT

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

At the Risk of Earthly Loss

Spring 2014. A scholar categorically declared in my hearing: "God does not have a Son!" I was stunned - and vowed to study this incredulous statement. Carefully considering the whole Bible and the writings of Ellen White I concluded that the new (1980) doctrine of the Trinity was not biblical - with 3 Gods (!), the immortality of Jesus, Catholic echoes, and thus a strong sense of ecumenical compromise - elements not found in over 100 years of Adventist history. In the end (overnight!) I lost my denominational career. My 1986 baptismal certificate vows to which I still adhere make no mention of the Trinity but simply state: **"1. I believe in God the Father, in His Son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit."** Amen! Simple. Clear. Precise. True. Sufficient.

Clarification · Correction: *Trinity* does NOT mean Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, or Godhead, or Heavenly Trio. The Doctrine of the Trinity defines God as a plurality of persons - a concept foreign to both Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy!

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."

THE #1 ISSUE: FUNDAMENTAL BELIEF #2

An Unbiblical Definition

The Official Statement

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.)

These Bible references do NOT establish a Doctrine of the Trinity; to the contrary - they challenge it!

Ellen White: "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" (Ms 8, 1914).

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 TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE

How Readest Thou?!

"Thus Sayeth the LORD"

Deut 4:35 "To you it was shown, that you might know that the LORD Himself is God; there is none other besides Him." → 4:39!

Deut 6:4 "Hear, O Israel: Yehova our God - Yehova is one." Jesus Himself affirms this highest confession of the Hebrew faith (Mk 12:28-34). **Deut 6 context → Rev 14:9!** ⚡

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד = עד = witness!

See also: Deut 32:39; 1Kgs 8:60; Isa 42:8; 43:10-11; 44:6,8; 45:18-22; 46:9; Hos 13:4; Neh 9:6; 1Chr 17:20

Isa 45:6 "That they may know from the rising of the sun to its setting that there is none besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other."

Mal 2:10 "Have we not all **one Father**? Has not **one God** created us?"

In Bible and Spirit of Prophecy:

Zech 14:9 "In that day it shall be—"The LORD is **one**," and His name **one**."

"God the Son" | "God the Spirit": 0x

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

Rom 3:30 "there is **one God** who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith." **Alpha → Omega ↑**

Rom 15:6 "that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." **1SM 197!**

1Cor 8:4-6 "we know that ... **there is no other God but one**. 5 For even if there are so-called gods ... (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." *Paul affirms OT monotheism!*

1Cor 11:3 "I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and **the head of Christ is God**."

Eph 1:17 "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him" (2Cor 11:31: "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ") **James 2:19** "You believe that **there is one God**. You do well."

Eph 4:5-6 "one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 **one God and Father of all**, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

1Thess 1:9-10 "how you turned to God from idols to serve **the living and true God**, 10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead."

I affirm the divinity and personality of Christ and the Holy Spirit. 100%.

1 Tim 2:5 "For there is **one God** and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus."

1 John 4:8-9 "He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. 9 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." *God ≠ Plurality but God the Father!*

2 John 3 "Grace, mercy, and peace ... from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love."

Rev 3:12 Jesus: "He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of **My God**, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of **My God** and the name of the city of **My God**, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from **My God**."

Rev 14:7 3 Angels' Message: Fear **God** · Give Glory to **God** · Worship **God** as Creator (→ Mt 16:16; 26:63; Lk 10:21; Jn 6:69).

"Let the Scriptures be read in simple faith, and let each one form his conceptions of God from His inspired Word"

(Letter 214, 1903, Oct. 9, to P. T. Magan and E. A. Sutherland).

Scripture translations: NKJV or my own



"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 Jn 4:9).
 "... let us make use of every opportunity to know the one true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent" (Yl December 21, 1893, par. 5).

Paul's first sermon: "Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God" (Acts 9:20).

☞ "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). "CHRIST IS DECLARED IN THE SCRIPTURES TO BE THE SON OF GOD. FROM ALL ETERNITY HE HAS SUSTAINED THIS RELATION TO JEHOVAH" (Ms22-1905.4). "He was the Son of the living God. His personality did not begin with His incarnation in the flesh (9LtMs, Lt 77, 1894, par. 9). ☞ **Eph 4:13** "till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God!"

"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). *Recommended Reading: The Story of Redemption ch.1*

"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 3/3 1874). "God is the Father of Christ; Christ is the Son of God. To Christ has been given an exalted position. He has been made equal with the Father" (8T 268).

"This fact the [fallen] angels would obscure, that Christ was the only begotten Son of God" (Lt 42 1910). Others "clearly set forth that Christ was the Son of God, existing with Him before the angels were created" (SR 15). **Must-Read: Proverbs 8:22-30 & PP 34!**

DA 530 - Divinity, not Trinity! "In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived" = the Father's life. "For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself" (Jn 5:26). *Purpose and context:* "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" (DA 530) - "He that hath the Son hath life." 1Jn 5:12. → 1Jn 5:5, 13; Jn 20:31! "I seek not Mine own glory," but the glory of Him that sent Me. Jn 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. In these words is set forth the great principle which is **the law of life for the universe. All things Christ received from God, but He took to give.** So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: **through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns**, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, **the law of life.**" (DA 21).

SCHOLARLY CONSENSUS



NO "Thus sayeth the LORD!"

- "That most of the leading SDA pioneers were non-Trinitarian" is "accepted Adventist history...either the pioneers were wrong and the present church is right, or the pioneers were right and the present Seventh-day Adventist Church has apostatized from biblical truth" (J. Moon, *The Trinity*, 190). **"Truth is God's basis for the unity of his people" (GW92 391).**
- "Most of the founders of Seventh-day Adventism would not be able to join the church today if they had to subscribe to the denomination's Fundamental Beliefs...most would not be able to agree to belief number 2" (the Trinity) (G. Knight, Ministry, 10/93, 10).
- "Adventist beliefs have changed over the years under the truth impact of 'present truth'. Most startling is the teaching regarding Jesus Christ...The Trinitarian understanding of God, now part of our fundamental beliefs, was not generally held by the early Adventists. Even today a few do not subscribe to it" (W. Johnson, AR Jan. 6, 1994, p. 10).
- The Trinity "cannot be clearly detected within the confines of the canon" (*Oxford Companion to the Bible* 1993, p. 782).
- "In the New Testament there is no explicit statement of the doctrine" of the trinity (Bromily, BEDT 1112).
- **"The concept of Trinity . . . that the three are one, is not explicitly stated but only assumed"** (F. Canale, SDABC 12:138).
- **"No text of Scripture specifically says that God is three Persons"** (K. Donkor, *Theology*, p. 20).
- **"No single Scripture passage states the doctrine of the Trinity**, it is assumed as a fact...only by faith can we accept the existence of the Trinity" (AR 158:31 4). **Truth "would bring into the fold of Christ thousands upon thousands" (GC 598)! ✨**

"Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain "Thus saith the Lord" in its support" (GC 595).

The Pioneer Platform: "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") *Our history is non-trinitarian!*

OFFICIAL STATEMENTS

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

Reality Check

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

"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." (https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/RH/RH-119800423-V157-20.pdf)

Issues: The Seventh-day Adventist Church and Certain Private Ministries (NAD 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.**"

☞ "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)