

The Sonship of Christ and the Spirit of Christ - MC1

Important note to the reader - Much of the content of this study comes from Michael McCaffrey's Video – “But Whom Say Ye That I Am”-Part 1. We strongly encourage you to watch his video, presented in the form of a personal testimony. Video URL: https://youtu.be/_AhyUGyrvI0?list=PLr0S14xfwHIT498jANzzA239pwg-mbKdb We believe his work to be inspired as his research has uncovered many Scriptures, Spirit of Prophecy Quotes, historical facts of our pioneers and other references, which will clearly show that every Seventh-day Adventist today who has a belief in the trinity doctrine as stated in the Fundamental Beliefs, has departed from the faith God gave to the pioneers, and confirmed by His Spirit. His presentation will make the danger clear and obvious. This study was prepared by Richard C. Vaughn.

Matthew chapter 16 and verse 15. **“He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?”** And we read in the Bible: **“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”** (Jeremiah 17:9)

There are many who have asked a question in just seven words, **“What should we know about the trinity?”**. This question is being discussed widely on the internet, and Facebook, all around the world.

Ellen White wrote, **“God means that truth shall be brought to the front and become the subject of examination and discussion, even though the contempt placed upon it. The minds of the people must be agitated; every controversy, every reproach, every effort to restrict liberty of conscience, is God’s means of awakening minds that otherwise might slumber.** (Mount of Blessing 33.2)”

We should all seek some perspective, and, understand on the subject, and what the Seventh-day Adventist Pioneers believed, and how they read and understood various scriptures and Spirit of Prophecy statements. Also to study what the Bible had to say, and to study, what the present Seventh-day Adventist church believes about who God is, because it seems that their perspective is different than that of the Pioneers.

We should also study the Catholic church’s perspective, as a point of reference, so that we can understand each perspective, and how they were approaching the scriptures, and what they understood. Then, after I understood their perspective, we would be in a place where we could decide what is true about who God is, based on the evidence.

Why this is so important?

Now we know that God raised up the Seventh-day Adventist Church for a specific purpose. It was brought into existence to fulfill a commission, and that commission is given in Testimonies Volume 9 page 19. Here is what Sister White had said: **“In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light bearers. To them has been entrusted the last warning for a perishing world. On them is shining wonderful light from the word of God. They have been given a work of the most solemn import – the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels messages. There is no other work of so great importance. They are to allow nothing else to absorb their attention. The most solemn truths ever entrusted to mortals have been given us to proclaim to the world. The proclamation of these truths is to be**

our work. The world is to be warned, and God's people are to be true to the trust committed to them." (9T 19)

The proclamation of the three Angel's Messages is the most solemn work ever committed to mortals. And this work was committed, specifically, to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, to give to the world. And, it is not just an intellectual message, the Three Angels Messages are to be a revelation. For example, we know that the First Angels Message commands us to fear God and give glory to Him, and we know to give glory to God means to represent His character.

We read in Christ's Object Lessons page 415: **"The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God** (the Seventh-day Adventist in the context of which we are speaking) **are to manifest His glory."** (Christ Object Lessons 415)

Of course, how we give glory to God, is through a revelation of His character of love. And the revelation of God's love is to be manifest in Seventh-day Adventists, and this was to be a final demonstration of the character of God to angels and to men. And by this revelation, the earth was to be lightened with His Glory in fulfillment of the promise in Revelation 18:1.

And, this commission, of giving the three angel's messages, to the world, and representing His character, all depend upon one thing, and that, is that we know God "aright."

We are told by Sister White in Ministry of Healing, in the chapter called: "A true Knowledge of God" **"Like our Saviour, we are in this world to do service for God. We are here to become like God in character, and by a life of service to reveal Him to the world. In order to be co-workers with God, in order to become like Him and to reveal His character, we must know Him aright. We must know Him as He reveals Himself. A knowledge of God is the foundation of all true education and of all true service. It is the only real safeguard against temptation. It is this alone that can make us like God in character. This is the knowledge needed by all who are working for the uplifting of their fellow men. Transformation of character, purity of life, efficiency in service, adherence to correct principles, all depend upon a right knowledge of God. This knowledge is the essential preparation both for this life and for the life to come."** (Ministry of Healing 409)

Like our Saviour, we are in this world to do service for God. We are here to become like God in character, and by a life of service to reveal Him to the world. And this again, is the reason why God intervened in human history, in the 19th century and raised up a movement of people called "Seventh-day Adventist", and this is our purpose.

So, we are to "reveal Him" to the world. And, the inspired words "In Order" show the condition to be met in order to "become like Him" and "reveal His character" is that we "must know Him aright". And "this alone", nothing more or nothing less "can make us like God in character." Again, "all depend upon a right knowledge of God" in order for us to "reveal Him" to the world and fulfill the first angel's message. Again, "knowing Him aright" requires that "We must know Him as He reveals Himself."

The Seventh-day Adventist church today does not believe that Jesus is the Son of God! Shocking as that sounds, just read these four statements: **"The father-son image cannot be**

literally applied to the divine Father-Son relationship within the Godhead. The Son is not the natural, literal Son of the Father. A natural child has a beginning, while within the Godhead the Son is eternal. The term “Son” is used metaphorically when applied to the Godhead.” (<http://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/materials/godhead-jesus-christ/question-sonship>)

“It may be inferred from the Scriptures that when the Godhead laid out the plan of salvation at some point in eternity past, they also took certain positions or roles to carry out the provisions of the plan.” (Pastor Frank B. Holbrook, Signs of the Times, July 1985, ‘Frank answers’)

Expanding on this idea of role playing we find the following: **“In order to eradicate sin and rebellion from the universe and to restore harmony and peace, one of the divine Beings accepted, and entered in, the role of the Father, another the role of the Son.”** (Gordon Jenson, Adventist Review, Oct. 31. 1996 p12)

“The title “Son” refers to His entry into time and does not deny at all His eternal origins. There are references in the Old Testament to “Sonship”, but these are always in anticipation of the incarnation.” (J.R. Hoffman, Ministry Magazine article “Is Jesus Jehovah God?” June 1982 p24)

So, when the church today says that Jesus is the Son of God, what they are really saying is that Jesus is just one of three eternal beings that entered into a metaphorical role play, where one divine being calls himself Father and another divine being called himself Son, when in reality neither a Father or Son. How many Adventists today would be shocked to discover that this is what our pastors are instructed to teach? In order to hold membership in the church, or even to hold office, this is what you must believe.

The first text that should come to our mind is: **“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. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”** (John 3:16-17)

Is it possible that we have all misunderstood this text, that it does not mean what it plainly says? How could God do this if He didn't have a Son to give.

At the baptism of Jesus, God the Father Himself said: **“Lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”** (Matthew 3:17)

And again, at the mount of transfiguration, God the Father Himself said: **“A voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.”** (Matthew 17:5) Here we have two instances where God Himself declared Jesus to be His Son. Audibly from Heaven. Did God believe what He said, and if not, why did he just not simply say what he meant? His two statements do not align with the current church's understanding.

Now there is this scripture concerning Christ temptation: **“And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.”** (Luke 4:3)

We can see in this text, something we may not have seen before. This temptation was not so much about the bread and Christ's hunger, as it was about His Sonship.

Sister white comments on this verse: ***“Satan flattered himself that he could lead Christ to doubt the words spoken from heaven at His baptism. If he could temp Him to question His sonship, and doubt the truth of the word spoken by His Father, he would gain a great victory.”*** (Confrontation 40.2)

After reading this statement, it becomes clear to us that it was Satan who was behind the movement to cast doubt on the sonship of Christ. Satan failed to gain the victory over Christ, but has he gained the victory over Christ's church?

We know that that the bible calls Jesus a Son even before his human birth. Consider Nebuchadnezzar when he saw a fourth figure like the Son of God in the fiery furnace: ***“He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.”*** (Daniel 3:25)

Solomon said: ***“Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?”*** (Proverbs 30:4) Solomon is telling us that the earth was created by a Father and His Son even before Jesus' human birth. This would contradict the church's understand that He took on the title of Son when he became human.

Sister White has the following to say: ***“It is the glory of the gospel that it is founded upon the principle of restoring in the fallen race the divine image by a constant manifestation of benevolence. This work began in the heavenly courts. There God decided to give human beings unmistakable evidence of the love with which He regarded them. He “So loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” ... In order fully to carry out this plan, it was decided that Christ, the only begotten Son of God, should give Himself an offering for sin. What line can measure the depth of this love?”*** (John 3:16) (Counsels on Health 222) Christ is called the Son of God even before He had given Himself an offering for sin. Because the word “should” is future tense, this giving of Himself had not yet happened. At this time “in the heavenly courts” before Christ had given Himself, he is called the “Son of God”. This statement of Christ Sonship long before His human birth is tied to John 3:16 that God gave His only begotten Son.

Sister White further clarifies: ***“God has given to the world and to angels the evidence of the changeless character of His love. He would part with His only begotten Son, send Him into the world...”*** (14MR 86) So here we see again that Jesus is called the “only begotten Son” before He was sent into the world.

Again, Sister White says: ***“How can it be that the helpless babe in Bethlehem's manger is still the divine Son of God?”*** (Youth's Instructor, November 21, 1895 “Child life of Jesus No. 1”)

In other words, when Jesus was born in Bethlehem's manger he was “still the divine Son of God” which meant that He was the divine Son of God before he was born in Bethlehem.

Again, Sister White says: **“While the Son of a human being, He became the Son of God in a new sense.”** (1SM 226.2) If Jesus at his human birth became the Son of God “in a new sense.” That means that before His human birth he was still the Divine Son of God in the original sense.

We read in the Desire of Ages: ***“God had promised to give the First-born of heaven to save the sinner.”*** (Desire of Ages 51.1)

Sister White further says: ***“He moved among them with the dignity and power of a heaven-born King.”*** (5T p253)

“If God could have changed this law to meet man in his fallen condition, would He not have done this, and retained His only begotten Son in Heaven? – He certainly would.” (BEcho Feb. 8, 1897 par3) Again, she says that Christ was the “only begotten Son” of God “in Heaven” before He became a human.

These statements and others like them, make void the current Seventh-day Adventist church’s belief that all references to Christ being a son are in anticipation of His human birth. As we study this subject, we realize that the Bible and Sister White are in harmony with one another and that both are at odds with the present teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist church.

Sister White tells us that this controversy of who Christ is, began in heaven: ***“Well, Lucifer, he was striving; he had glory in the heavenly courts, but he was striving for Christ’s place next to God. Next, he wanted to be God, but he could not obtain that. 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.”*** (Ms86-1910 (Aug 21, 1910) par 30) What is so revealing from this statement is that it shows that the devil’s first rebellion was to “get up a warfare over the matter” of Christ being “the only begotten Son of God”.

Lucifer wanted to be God, and the reason he couldn’t be is because Christ was the only begotten Son of God. Lucifer was not begotten of God; he was not God’s Son, he did not proceed forth and come from God as Christ did. There was a distinction between the two: Christ and Lucifer. The distinction given in the Spirit of Prophecy is that Christ was the only begotten Son of God, and Lucifer wasn’t, for Lucifer was a created being. In trying to make a case for his argument against God and for excluding him from the Godhead, Lucifer would have to show that Christ was not really a Son. This is the warfare that he took up in the heavenly courts. This warfare that Christ is not the only begotten Son of God is why Lucifer and his angels were thrust down to the earth.

We know that this war in heaven began over the law of God, and of course the first commandment is that we are to have no other God before Him. In dethroning Christ, removing Christ’s Sonship, he was in effect creating another god, and the god that he wanted to create was himself.

Elaborating on Lucifer’s rebellion against the Sonship of Christ, Sister White makes this incredible statement: ***“Angels were expelled from heaven because they would not work in harmony with God. They fell from their high estate because they wanted to be exalted. They had come to exalt themselves, and they forgot that their beauty of person and of character came from the Lord Jesus. This fact the angels would obscure, that Christ was the only***

begotten Son of God, and they came to consider that they were not to consult Christ. One angel began the controversy and carried it on until there was rebellion in the heavenly courts among the angels. They were lifted up because of their beauty.” (Lt42-1910.3)

In this statement, the sonship of Christ is not metaphorical, it's a “fact”. “This fact the angels would obscure” This fact being “that Christ was the only begotten Son of God”. Not only is the Sonship of Christ a “fact”, but it was a “fact”, meaning he already was the Son of God in heaven when Lucifer and the angels rebelled, not a future application.

We see the reality of Christ's Sonship expressed again in another statement when Sister White says: ***“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.”*** (Letter to J.H. Kellogg, Letter No. K-303, Aug 29, 1903)

This statement completely and totally undermines any idea that the Sonship of Christ is tied to his human birth when He was incarnate, because in the statement we read that Christ declared that He was to leave His position of dignity, and disguise His holy mission by assuming the likeness of a man, which means it's still future tense. The divine Sonship of Christ is said to be by Sister White, before He assumed the likeness of a man, to be a “reality” and a “fact” and therefore it cannot be harmonized at all with this idea that His Sonship is metaphorical or a role play or a symbol. Such ideas as these are totally and completely at odds with the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy.

These statements, especially over the warfare of Lucifer against the Sonship of Christ, really were crystal clear showing again that the effort to undermine Christ's Sonship, to cast doubt on the words spoken from heaven by Christ's Father. “This is my beloved Son”. The effort to obscure the “fact” that Christ was the Son of God, when in reality at that time He was “the Son of the infinite God”, all these attacks against the Sonship of Christ are from the enemy of souls, especially today.

This next statement continues to elaborate on this warfare against the Sonship of Christ, is actually the Father's response to this warfare by Lucifer. It shows how God responds to Lucifer's attack against the Sonship of Christ. It is the most authoritative of all the Spirit of Prophecy concerning this subject of Christ Sonship.

Sister White says, ***“To dispute the supremacy of the Son of God, thus impeaching the wisdom and love of the Creator, had become the purpose of this prince of angels. To this object he was about to bend the energies of that master mind, which, next to Christ's, was first among the hosts of God. But He who would have the will of all His creatures free, left none unguarded to the bewildering sophistry by which rebellion would seek to justify itself. Before the great contest should open, all were to have a clear presentation of His will, whose wisdom and goodness were the spring of all their joy. The King of the universe summoned the heavenly hosts before Him, that in their presence He might set forth the true position of His Son and show the relation He sustained to all created beings. The Son of God shared the Father's throne, and the glory of the eternal, self-existent One encircled both. About the throne gathered the holy angels, a vast, unnumbered throng – “ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands” (Rev 5:11), the most exalted angels, as ministers and***

subjects, rejoicing in the light that fell upon them from the presence of the Deity. Before the assembled inhabitants of heaven, the King declared that none but Christ, the Only Begotten of God, could fully enter into His purposes, and to Him it was committed to execute the mighty counsels of His will. The Son of God had wrought the Father's will in the creation of all the hosts of heaven; and to Him, as well as to God, their homage and allegiance were due. Christ was still to exercise divine power, in the creation of the earth and its inhabitants. But in all this He would not seek power or exaltation for Himself contrary to God's plan, but would exalt the Father's glory and execute His purposes of beneficence and love." (PP 36)

The King of the universe, God the eternal Father, summoned all the hosts of heaven together, all the angels, the cherubim, and the living beings, all were assembled together. Why? "To set forth the true position of His Son. The reason why this is significant is because Lucifer was spreading lies that were undermining the true position of God's Son. You can see the contest happening here of Lucifer's claim to Deity being based on his stripping Christ of His Sonship. Its significant then, that God in setting forth the true position of His Son, declared before all the inhabitants of heaven that Jesus was "the Only begotten Son of God". So, God declared, before the creation of the earth, because Sister White says Christ was "still" that's future tense "to exercise divine power, in the creation of the earth". So, if the earth had not yet been created, then Jesus had not yet become human, and yet in setting forth the true position of His Son, God declared in the hearing of all the angels, that Christ was "the Only begotten of God" and called Him "The Son of God". So, anything contrary to this is a lie manufactured in the mind of Satan and spread by his willing and deceitful followers in the church today.

Who was it that was to cast doubt over the words of God spoken at Christ's baptism "**This is my beloved Son**"? Who was it that sought to obscure the "fact" that Christ was the "Only begotten Son of God"? Who is it that was seeking to cast doubt upon the true position of God's Son in order to justify himself in the warfare against God and his claim to be like the Most High? It was Lucifer!

Any teaching that would undermine the truthfulness of the Sonship of Christ being the "Only begotten Son of God" even before the creation of the world, is the teaching of Lucifer. And yet we find this doctrine of the devil being taught in our church.

We are going to represent Christ in giving the last message of mercy to the world, which is a revelation of His character of love. Then we are going to have to have a correct understanding of who God is and who His Son is.

It's no wonder then as this great controversy is coming to a close, that Satan would redouble his effort to obscure the "fact" that Christ is the "Only begotten Son of God".

We also see that God is now working magnificently to restore this understanding to His people so that they can fulfill the commission that was given to them. It's remarkable that with such an authoritative statement before all the universe, that Seventh-day Adventist, or anyone, would still take the words of their ministers and pastors and religious leaders and heads of independent ministries, over the words of the Monarch of the Universe.

Whose words are our authority?

“If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.” (1 John 5:9-10)

This is a powerful scripture, because this is exactly what is going on in Christianity today, in that people are taking the words of their pastors and ministers (arm of flesh) as authority and on that word denying the testimony, the record that God gave of His Son. So, when we take that word of men that Jesus Sonship is metaphorical, or a role play, and that it is not real, then we are “making God a liar” because, in effect, do not believe the testimony, the record that God gave of his Son.

So, does the Trinity doctrine by Adventists, help make God a liar?

Sister White says: ***“The truths most plainly revealed in the bible have been involved in doubt and darkness by learned men, who, with a pretense of great wisdom, teach that the scriptures have a mystical, a secret, spiritual meaning not apparent in the language employed. These men are false teachers. It was to such a class that Jesus declared, “Ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God.” (Mark 12:24). The language of the Bible should be explained according to its obvious meaning, unless a symbol of figure is employed ... If men would but take the Bible as it reads, if there were no false teachers to mislead and confuse their minds, a work would be accomplished that would make angels glad, and that would bring into the fold of Christ thousands upon thousands who are now wandering in error.”*** (The Great Controversy (1888) 598.3)

So, isn't this a perfect description of what the church is teaching by saying Jesus' Sonship is metaphorical, or a role play? When God calls Jesus His son, they say, no, no, no, He's not really His Son, He's a metaphorical Son. And in doing this, what they are saying is that there is a mystical or spiritual meaning in the words, not in the language employed. So, in effect what this is doing is taking the words of God to mean something other than what they say. So, this is what we would call spiritualizing away the truth of the Bible. And again, underscoring this idea, she says “If men would take the Bible as it reads” “there would be no false teachers to mislead and confuse their minds”. So, this is what we need to do, to “take the Bible as it reads”.

Again, Sister White says: ***“In order to be co-workers with God, in order to become like Him and to reveal His character, we must “know Him aright”. “We must know Him as He reveals Himself.”*** (Ministry of Healing 409)

So, when God calls Jesus His Son, that's exactly what Jesus is, “Gods Only begotten Son”.

Most people take the Bible as it reads. They would never really know otherwise unless they started studying what the church taught about this subject. It is the teaching of the church that will be a surprise to most people. Therein lies the danger, because most people will not take the time to investigate the matter. Yet there is even another danger and that is in what the church teaches about the subject of the Holy Spirit and who the Holy Spirit is. Most believe the Holy Spirit is a third entity or being other than the Father or the Son.

The fact is that the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, actually teach a different view than the SDA church. Therefore, to understand the other view and what the church teaches as to who the Holy Spirit is, we will need to dig deeply, uncover the facts and weigh the evidence. The truth will prevail. So let us begin. Some of the confusion regarding three entities are certain Scriptures.

For example: **“And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”** (Matthew 3:16-17)

Most people see a clear delineation of three persons, or entities: There was God in heaven, Jesus in the water, and the Spirit, the third person of the Godhead descending as a dove upon Christ. And concerning the third person of the Godhead there is a statement like this that also seems very clear to most people. After all, Sister White made this third person statement: **“*The prince of the power of evil can only be held in check by the power of God in the third person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit.*”** (Special Testimonies, Series A, 10:37)

How is it that many other people could read this and have a different perspective? If one view is correct, and the other view is not, without understanding both perspectives, that would be intellectually dishonest if one is searching for the correct understanding. Jesus warned of deception in the last days, four times in Matthew 24. So, studying the evidence should help us decide, what is the truth. Ultimately, we know that the truth is Jesus, and all truth will lead us closer to Him, because He is the truth.

Often, self, with its prejudice and pre-conceived ideas, gets in the way and a bias often prevents us from objectively understanding and studying things. So, if we would just set our bias aside, drawing closer to Christ, objectively studying as, say a novice, understanding what truth is will result. So rather than making a decision upon only understanding certain texts the way we always understood them concerning the Holy Spirit, we should want to see what it was that those who rejected the Trinity were seeing. We should want to be able to understand their perspective and see the scriptures from their point of view. And then we would be in a position where we could understand both views, and we could make an intellectually honest decision concerning which view was correct.

The opposing view also had some very clear quotations like this one from Sister White: **“We want that complete and perfect understanding which the Lord alone can give. It is not safe to catch the spirit from another. We want the Holy Spirit, which is Jesus Christ.”** (Letter 66, Apr 10, 1894 Par. 17-19)

Most SDA's have believed that the third person of the Godhead was someone other than Christ, so reading that statement, the Holy Spirit is Jesus Christ. We know it can't harmonize with the current SDA view, but the statement is clear enough to be a problem. Now the question is, does the statement harmonize with the Bible?

For example, we read: **“The last Adam was made a quickening spirit.”** (1 Corinthians 15:45) **“The Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”** (2 Corinthians 3:17)

So, we see in these two Bible texts that Jesus, who was the “last Adam” was made “a quickening spirit”, and very plainly. “The Lord” who is Jesus is “that Spirit”.

Then there is this Scripture: **“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.”** (Romans 8:9-10) Now let’s make this personal. So, who is it according to this text that is in me? If I as a trinitarian believe that the “Spirit of Christ” was someone other than Christ, then it could not be Christ in me because it’s the “Spirit of God that dwell’s in me”. Yet if it was “Christ in me”, and Christ was someone other than the Holy Spirit, then it couldn’t be the Holy Spirit in me because then “Christ would be in me”. So, the trinitarian understanding of the Spirit of God does not harmonize with these verses. But they do make sense if “the Spirit of God that dwells in you” is the “Spirit of Christ” because it is Christ, as it says, “Christ be in you”.

And this is also clear in John chapter 14 speaking of the Comforter: **“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you, Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?”** (John 14:16-21)

John chapter 14 clearly identifies who the Comforter is, and Jesus Himself identifies who the Comforter is. In verse 18 Jesus said I will not leave you comfortless. (For three and a half years they were comforted by His physical presence.) But now He is making a promise that, that comfort will continue. He says, “I will come to you”, and in verse 20 He says, “I in you”, and in verse 21 He says, “I will love him, and will manifest myself to him”. In reading these verses it is abundantly clear that the Comforter is Jesus. It is Him that would come to and be in each of us”. It is Him that would “manifest Himself to me and you.” And it is so clear that, although we have looked at these verses and this chapter and realized how could we have understood this any other way for so long? We just never looked at it objectively. The disciples had correct understanding of who the Comforter was because we read in verse 22 “Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?”. So, even the disciples understood that Jesus was “manifesting Himself”, they were just asking about how, but not who. They understood the who to be Jesus.

Commenting on the passage, Sister White said: ***“That Christ should manifest Himself to them, and yet be invisible to the world, was a mystery to the disciples. They could not understand the words of Christ in their spiritual sense. They were thinking of the outward, visible manifestation. They could not take in the fact that they could have the presence of Christ with them, and yet He be unseen by the world. They did not understand the meaning of a spiritual manifestation.”*** (The Southern Work, Sep 13, 1898 par.2)

Sister White agrees with the Bible that Jesus is “Manifesting Himself” and this “Manifestation of Himself” would be “the presence of Christ with them”. So, when Jesus said, “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever”. Jesus was speaking of Himself in the third person. So, the Comforter he was speaking of was who would abide with them forever, which would be Himself, it was Jesus, Jesus is the Comforter.

Just as He said: **“Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”** (Matthew 28:20) So, it isn’t some other being, or other person other than Christ, that is with us. It’s Jesus that’s with us.

Sister White adds this statement: **“Let them study the seventeenth of John and learn how to pray and how to live the prayer of Christ. He is the Comforter. He will abide in their hearts, making their joy full.”** (RH Jan 27, 1903 Art. A, Par. 13)

And she also says: **“As by faith we look to Jesus, our faith pierces the shadow, and we adore God for His wondrous love in giving Jesus the Comforter.”** (19MR 297.3)

And again: **“Christ is to be known by the blessed name of Comforter.”** (Ms7-1902.10)

And finally, if there was still any doubt as to what Sister White believed, she said: **“The Saviour is our Comforter. This I have proved Him to be.”** (Ms34-1892.30) So, it’s as clear as it can be that Sister White believed the Comforter, is Jesus Christ, and that as the Comforter, He would abide with us.

Question: What then is the Spirit descending upon Christ like a dove at His baptism? We read this statement from Sister White: **“The heavens were opened, and beams of light and glory proceeded therefrom and assumed the form of a dove, in appearance like burnished gold. The dove-like form was emblematical of the meekness and gentleness of Christ.”** (Youth’s Instructor, Mar 1, 1874 Par. 4) So, the dove like form did not represent a third being, it was the Spirit of the Father and it was “emblematical”, meaning it was a visual representation or visual symbol of the character of Jesus, “His gentleness and meekness”.

While these statements clearly define who the Comforter is (Christ), the Bible also gives the Comforter a name. This comes from the study of the word Comforter. The Greek word for Comforter is “parakletos”. Dictionary Definition g3875 (an intercessor, consoler: advocate, comforter) only used in the writings of John 5 times: 4 times as comforter, 1 time as advocate

John 14:16, **“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.”**

John 14:26 **“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things.”**

John 15:26, **“But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.”**

John 16:7, **“For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.”** And in every instance the word Parakletos is translated as Comforter except in the fifth one.

1 John 2:1, **“And if any man sin, we have an *advocate* with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”** And the word “advocate” here is the Greek word parakletos. So, the Advocate, or the parakletos is the Comforter that we have with the Father, who is “Jesus Christ the righteous” So, according to the Bible, we are seeing that the Comforter is Jesus Christ, and, according to Ellen White, the Comforter is Jesus Christ.

But according to the present Seventh-day Adventist church, the Comforter is **not** Jesus Christ, they say it is another god being.

Now it is safe, with the evidence presented, to conclude that the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, is Jesus Christ, it's His omnipresence to us, and not some other third person, or third being other than Christ. And, it was so clear, in fact, both from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy that we really wonder how could we have missed this before? How was it that for so long we read the plainest statements and took the Holy Spirit to be someone other than Jesus? Especially when it clearly wasn't according to the Bible or the Spirit of Prophecy. Here is a statement which answers the question about how this could be and why: ***“The reason why the churches are weak and sickly and ready to die, is that the enemy has brought influences of a discouraging nature to bear upon trembling souls. He has sought to shut Jesus from their view as the comforter, as one who reproveth, who warns, who admonishes them, saying, “This is the way, walk ye in it.”*** (Review and Herald, Aug 26, 1890 - par. 10)

This quote should be like a light turning on in our darkened minds. Just as Satan and his angels had sought to obscure the “fact” “that Christ was the Only Begotten Son of God”, he has also “sought to shut Jesus from our view as the Comforter.”

In 1980 the Trinity doctrine came into the church as a Fundamental Belief. So here in 2020 we have been wandering in the trinitarian wilderness for forty years, so close to the heavenly Canaan. But God is waking up His church around the world today. Isaiah wrote of this time in chapter 60:1, 2 **“Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.”** The darkness that Rome has kept the whole world in with its dangerous doctrines, she will pay in the plagues and at the end of the millennium, as God will avenge His saints.

We have more light to cover, as we dig deeper for more truth. No matter how long you have been an Adventist, isn't it a joy to know that it is Jesus Christ that dwells in you and not a third being that never had the human experience? It should magnify the intimacy of your experience and relationship with Christ.

Ellen White quoting Jesus wrote this: ***“I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not. Neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him, for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. (John 14:16-17). This refers to the omnipresence of the***

Spirit of Christ, Called the Comforter.” (14MR 179) So, the Comforter is the omnipresence of Jesus Christ.

And Still today, many do not understand the significance of the spiritual manifestation of Jesus, because again, Satan “has sought to shut Jesus from their view as the Comforter.” The world and especially the SDA church are facing a real crisis.

Sister White, wrote, knowing that we would be facing this crisis: ***“If the pillar of our faith will not stand the test of investigation, it is time that we know it. There must be no spirit of Phariseeism cherished among us. When Christ came to his own, his own received Him not; and it is a matter of solemn interest to us that we should not pursue a similar course in refusing light from heaven.”*** (Review and Herald, June 18, 1889 Par. 5)

If the trinity doctrine is not correct, it is time that we knew it, and we need to be careful lest in rejecting, these evidences, and many of the things we’ve studied with you in this study, and that we be careful that we’re not refusing light from heaven.

For all of us, the identity of the Holy Spirit should be settled, as it is Christ’s omnipresence, it was so clear that Christ is our Comforter, that He would come, that He would manifest Himself in us, and we need to be sure how that works.

We will address that with a statement that answers how that works, but first we need to look at another statement from Sister White, because a lot of people use this statement to say that we should not even study this subject: ***“It is not essential for us to be able to define just what the Holy Spirit is. Christ tells us that the Spirit is the Comforter, “the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father.” It is plainly declared regarding the Holy Spirit that, in His work of guiding men into all truth, “He shall not speak of Himself.” John 15:26; 16:13 The nature of the Holy Spirit is a mystery. Men cannot explain it, because the Lord has not revealed it to them. Men having fanciful views may bring together passages of Scripture and put a human construction on them, but the acceptance of these views will not strengthen the church. Regarding such mysteries, which are too deep for human understanding, silence is golden.”*** {AA 52.1}

And it’s important to address this statement, because it’s often used to put up a wall, and eliminates the necessity for any investigation concerning the Holy Spirit. But we must make a very necessary distinction here, that is not being made by those who use this quote to say that we can’t understand the identity of the Holy Spirit. ***“It is not essential for us to be able to define just what the Holy Spirit is.”*** The word ***“what”*** is telling us that it’s not necessary to understand what the Holy Spirit is, in terms of its essence or material makeup or its nature, which is what Sister White further clarifies when she says, “The ***nature*** of the Holy Spirit is a mystery.”

Let us make it crystal clear here, that none of what we are sharing is even venturing to guess into what the nature of the Holy Spirit is. We are talking about the **identity** of the Holy Spirit, in terms of, **who** the Holy Spirit is, which is completely different than **what** this statement is warning against. And of course, it is important for us to know if it’s Christ, or if it’s not Christ, because it makes a tremendous difference.

So, now back to the idea of wanting to understand how the Holy Spirit is Christ, not the nature of the Spirit, but how was it, that the Comforter was Jesus Christ? This next statement really answered a lot of questions for us and made it a lot clearer.

In 1895 Ellen White wrote this: ***“Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally; therefore, it was altogether for their advantage that He should leave them, go to His Father, and send the Holy Spirit to be His successor on earth. The Holy Spirit is Himself, divested of the personality of humanity, and independent thereof. He would represent Himself as present in all places by His Holy Spirit, as the Omnipresent.”*** (Lt 119-1895.18)

Now what we want to point out here is that contextually this statement, is talking about the significance of Jesus being human. That as a human, and being “Cumbered”, that is, restricted or held back by His humanity, he “could not be in every place personally”. So, as a human, Jesus could not be “Omnipresent”. Then she adds “therefore, it was altogether for their advantage”, that is the disciples advantage, “that He should leave them and go to His Father.” Now when Christ left the disciples and went to His Father, it was to be **glorified**. Now Jesus is both human and Divine, and it is by His Divine nature and power that He is omnipresent, since it is His Divine nature that is unencumbered by His humanity, and able to operate independently of it.

For example, when Christ became a human we are told: ***“He laid aside His glory and His majesty. He was God, but the glories of the form of God He for a while relinquished.”*** (7ABC 446.1)

Now the glories of the form of God would include His Divine attributes, including His “omnipresence”, and these Divine attributes, “He for a while relinquished.” In other words, He set them aside and in clothing His Divinity with humanity, He “relinquished” or “laid aside” His Divine powers and made Himself subject to His human nature. But that was not permanent, that was “for a while” that He relinquished them.

Now if you think about it, Jesus Himself, did not even perform a single miracle by His own power. As He Himself said: ***“The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.”*** (John 14:10) But when Jesus ascended after His resurrection, He was glorified. And “the glories in the form of God” that “He for a while” had “relinquished” in becoming a human, and after His ascension He took them up once more.

And this is why John wrote: ***“The Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.”*** (John 7:39)

And this is why Jesus speaking of sending the Comforter said: ***“I go away, and come again unto you.”*** (John 14:26) He was going away, that is back to His Father in Heaven, but would come again unto them, after He was glorified, to the disciples in His omnipresent Spirit.

And so, it is written: ***“God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”*** (Galatians 4:6)

And these statements help us to understand how the Holy Spirit is the omnipresence of Jesus. With this understanding of Christ humanity, and His Divinity, and how they operate, we then are able

to better understand the meaning of Sister White's statements concerning the **third person** of the Godhead, which today are so often shrouded in confusion.

Take this statement for example, Sister White said: ***“Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the third person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power.”*** (Desire of Ages 671)

Now let's break this statement down because the word “Godhead” itself, simply means “divine” or “divinity”. It is a word that refers to the nature of Christ. So, when Sister White says the third person of the Godhead, she's talking of the third person of divinity, or divine nature. Then if we take a look at the phrase “the third person”, it's a grammatical reference, not a numeric one, and this is supported by many other statements from Sister White, where we use her writings that are clear, to clarify her statements that may not be as clear such as “the third person of the Godhead” statement.

So, let's use all of Sister White's statements concerning this subject, to give us a correct perspective on the teaching and the belief that she had concerning the Spirit of Christ. So, in Christ Himself, in His humanity would be considered the first person, and this would refer to His human nature

Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally. So, it was by His Holy Spirit, which Sister White said is “Himself”, but divested of the personality of humanity, and independent thereof. Meaning, that Christ's Divine nature, which is His Holy Spirit, is able to operate in the third person, meaning apart from His humanity, divested from it and independent thereof. And this is what Sister White meant when she wrote “the third person of the Godhead”. She did not mean that it was a third Divine Being, she meant that it was the “spiritual manifestation” of the omnipresence of Christ in “the third person”, apart from His “Humanity”.

So, the phrase “the third person” being a grammatical sense, just means that the Holy Spirit being “the third person” of Deity, or Divinity just means that it's Christ in “the third person” in His Divine nature. And that's why we read “the third person of the Godhead” because it's referring to the Divinity of Christ unencumbered by His humanity. So, it was just Sister Whites way of trying to articulate that the Holy Spirit was the Divine Presence of Christ operating apart from His humanity.

Now, when we look at the statement “the third person of the Godhead” we can use parallel statements to further give evidence for and confirm that the Holy Spirit is Jesus Christ, that “the third person of the Godhead” is Jesus.

So, consider this statement: ***“There is no power in you apart from Christ, but it is your privilege to have Christ abiding in your heart by faith, and He can overcome sin in you, when you cooperate with His efforts.”*** (Our High Calling 76.5) Now, of course the “He” here, is a reference to “Christ”. “He can overcome sin in you, when you cooperate with His efforts”.

When you compare this statement to the one, we read earlier where Sister White said: ***“Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the third person of the Godhead”***, we have a contradiction, if we understand the third person of the Godhead to be a being, or a person other than Christ, because if sin could be resisted and overcome “only” by the third person of the Godhead, then we have a contradiction when she says that **“Christ can overcome sin**

in you". So, we have to take all of Sister White's statements and bring harmony to them if we are to understand her true position.

Now consider this other statement as another witness: **"Jesus alone has power to save from sin, to free from the power of evil;"** (Review & Herald Feb 10, 1891 Par 5)

And speaking of the individual: **"There is but one agency whereby he may be cleansed from sin. He must accept the propitiation that has been made by the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world."** (Signs of the Times, May 30, 1895 Par 3)

So here she says, "Jesus alone" has the power to save from sin. Again, this completely contradicts the statement earlier that "sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the third person of the Godhead". So, who is it that can overcome sin in us? Is it "Jesus alone" or "the mighty agency of the third person of the Godhead" alone? Again, these ideas are completely contradictory, unless, we understand "the third person of the Godhead" to be the omnipresence of Jesus' Divine nature, independent of His humanity. Then we can bring harmony to these statements and we can understand that "the third person of the Godhead" is Jesus.

Note – We find that in some of Ellen White's statements concerning the Holy Spirit, our need to understand the way in which she referred to the Holy Spirit as an **"agency"**, in both of these statements we looked at earlier. So, it helps us to understand that the Holy Spirit is an "agency" and a means by which Jesus makes Himself "Omnipresent", thereby we can grasp a little better, all these statements concerning "the third person of the Godhead".

"Christ is withdrawn only from the eye of sense, but He is as truly present by His Spirit as when He was visibly present on Earth." (Signs of the Times, Apr 7, 1890 Par 6) And this is a significant statement because it is telling us that the presence of the Spirit of Christ in us today, was just as much the presence of Jesus as when He walked on the earth, in fact more so, because he now dwells in us. And again, this was a beautiful revelation, to understand that it's literally Jesus own presence in us.

As Sister White says: **"Jesus invites his own presence to your soul. He says, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come into him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Shall we not open the door of our hearts to the divine guest?"** (Signs of the Times, Nov 30, 1888 par.7)

As it should dawn on us, that it's the presence of Jesus in us, His very own presence, and not someone else who has not had the human experience, it should cause us to see it as a beautiful and very welcome revelation, because it makes our relationship with Christ infinitely more intimate. He is the One that was touched with the feeling of our infirmities, who walked in human flesh, and who knows what it is to be human, who was tempted as we are tempted, and who was without sin, who has lived in our fallen nature, and yet was victorious over all sin. The one who is also our advocate, our comforter before the throne of God in Heaven in the Most Holy Place, He is the one that is in us.

Satan "has sought to obscure" this truth from many of our brothers and sisters in Christ who are still under his satanic influence, "shutting Jesus from their view as the Comforter."

So far in this study we studied about: The Sonship of Christ, and the Spirit of Christ. And yet, the most astonishing revelation concerning the subject of the Trinity, is actually the history of it, and how it came into the Seventh-day Adventist church.

Some of us are familiar with this statement: **“We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us and His teaching in our past history.”** (Ms 139-1901.28)

In our next study, we will look at the history of the Seventh-day Adventist movement and some astonishing revelations, especially concerning the first 50 years of the movement, how the pioneers were united in their understanding of God, and then look at how this titanic shift in understanding of who God is, began to take place in the early 1890's, and how this led to a crisis that nearly split the church in 1903, had God not miraculously intervened through Sister White.

This is history that every serious SDA should know, for it is imperative that we understand how God led his church through this controversy, and also something that will help us in our quest to know who God is. It will help us to understand the big picture of this century old controversy and how the trinity doctrine was not brought into our church by prayerful study, but through subtlety, manipulation, coercion, secret Bible conferences, deception and rebellion against the Holy Spirit. Yet at the end of it all, there is good news, because God has a church upon the earth, and it will fulfill its mission.

Next Study: **The History – MC-2 “Forgetting the Way the Lord Has Led Us”**

