

The Son of God (including Ellen White quotes)

by Terry Hill

Chapter 1

The Controversy

This is a theological study concerning the Christ of the Bible. Its purpose is to show that He is truly the Son of God. This is a study that demands our fullest attention. It includes quotes from Ellen G. White.

Officially, Seventh-day Adventists declare today that Christ, in His pre-existence, is not a true Son. This is because they do not accept that He is begotten (sourced) of God (the Father). Instead they regard such terminologies as 'Father' and 'Son' as only metaphorical (figurative). This leads them to conclude that for the sake of the redemption of mankind, the two divine personalities known by these designations are only role-playing these parts.

This present-day reasoning of Seventh-day Adventism is totally contrary to what was believed by Seventh-day Adventists whilst Ellen White was alive. It is also contrary to what was believed by early Christianity. It was even at variance with developing Christianity although by saying that the Son is everlastingly begotten of the Father (this was at the Council of Nicaea in AD 325), the latter did eventually go beyond what the Bible reveals. This led to a corruption of what the Scriptures say regarding the Godhead and eventually developed into a teaching that became the central belief of apostate Christianity. This teaching is the orthodox doctrine of the trinity.

Within this orthodoxy, the belief is maintained that the Son is of (meaning belonging to) the same substance as the Father. This is something else that is not revealed in Scripture but it was the reasoning that led to the formulation of the Creed of Nicaea (AD 325). These two beliefs therefore ('everlastingly begotten' and 'of the same substance') are purely human speculation, meaning, that which is not revealed by God. This is the entire problem with the orthodox trinity doctrine. It is based on speculation. Remove the speculation and there is no trinity doctrine.

The trinity doctrine, as officially expressed today by Seventh-day Adventists, is different from orthodoxy. This is inasmuch as they do not accept that Christ is begotten of the Father therefore they do not believe He is a true Son. A major part of the trinity debate revolves around this issue.

The Son of God controversy

The entire Godhead 'problem' revolves around the fact that the Scriptures reveal that both the Father and the Son are said to be God. By reason of this study, this is the mystery upon which we are attempting to shed some light. In brief, it is to understand more fully what John meant when he wrote

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 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 1:1-3

Reasoning intelligently, an individual cannot be the same individual (personality) as the one they are with so the Scriptures reveal here two separate individuals (two separate personages or personalities). Both are said to be God.

Note in these verses that John does not mention the Holy Spirit. Interesting also is that the Greek actually reads “the Word was “with **the** God” (Gr. ton qeon). If translated this way, the verse would say “In [the] beginning was the Word, and the Word was with **the God**, and the Word was God”. Note the bracketed ‘the’ denoting that there is no article present. This article (the) therefore is supplied.

From the very beginning of his gospel, John needed to carefully differentiate between God and the Word (God the Father and His Son). He could not afford to cause confusion. I say this because at that time, some were trying to inculcate heresies concerning Christ into the Christian faith. John therefore would have chosen his words very carefully.

The author of these notes regards the gospel of John as a divinely inspired theology (see John 20:31). He believes it was written to combat the heresies to which reference has been made above. This I believe was John’s entire purpose in writing it. It was not just another gospel concerning the life and teachings of Jesus. This is why the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke are called ‘the synoptic gospels’. John’s gospel is so much different. Concerning the Son of God, it is a divine theology.

Take note that John did not say it was ‘the God’ (the Father) who became flesh but “**the Word**” (John 1:14). This is why Ellen White repeatedly referred to Christ as **the Son** of the infinite God (the Father). She did not say He was the infinite God Himself, at least not as far as personalities are concerned. We shall be taking a look at some of these quotes later. As the scriptures also say

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high”

Hebrew 1:1-3

Here the Son is said to be the “[express image](#)” of God’s person (Gr. hupostasis). This means that as a personality He cannot be the same personality (personage) as the one of whom He is an image. This is only a reasonable conclusion to draw. Again we are talking in terms of two separate personalities, both of whom are God. This is a major part of the mystery of God. As the writer of Hebrews went on to say

“[But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.](#)” Hebrews 1:8

The author of these notes reasons that it is only possible for the Son to be truly God if He is begotten of God meaning God from God.

In Hebrews 1:3, the Son is said to be the “[express image](#)” of the ‘hupostasis’ of God, meaning the exact likeness of who and everything that God is (there is a discussion of this word ‘hupostasis’ in the ‘Begotten Series’ to be added to this website later). This is in keeping with the NEB translation of John 1:1 which says

“[When all things began, the word already was. The word dwelt with God and what God was, the word was.](#)” John 1:1 New English Bible

The word ‘hupostasis’ means substance or under-girding etc. In other words, it is the ‘hupostasis’ that makes something what it is. This can be seen above where the NEB says “[what God was, the Word was](#)”.

Weight of evidence

In this article we shall primarily be taking a look at what the New Testament Scriptures say concerning the One in Scripture referred to as the only begotten Son of God. As we have noted previously, the Seventh-day Adventist Church says today that He is not really a Son, at least not in His pre-existence. This is why they often refer to Him today as the Second Person of the Godhead. This was totally opposite to what was believed and taught by the pioneers of Seventh-day Adventism. This includes Ellen White. She maintained that Christ was begotten of God therefore He is a true son.

So how can we know for sure as to who is correct and who is in error in this matter? The only way that this can be determined is to study for ourselves to see what the Scriptures say and then decide from the weight of evidence that we find. In the Third Volume of the Testimonies Ellen White wrote

“[The practical and the doctrinal should be combined in order to impress hearts with the importance of yielding to the claims of truth after the understanding has been convinced by the weight of evidence.](#)” (*Ellen G. White, 3rd Volume Testimonies, page 237, ‘Self-caring ministers’*)

She also said later in the same volume

“The unbelief that demands perfect knowledge will never yield to the evidence that God is pleased to give. He requires of His people faith that rests upon the weight of evidence, not upon perfect knowledge. Those followers of Christ who accept the light that God sends them must obey the voice of God speaking to them when there are many other voices crying out against it.” (*Ellen G. White, 3rd Volume Testimonies, page 258, ‘The Laodicean Church’*)

She then added

“It requires discernment to distinguish the voice of God.” (*Ibid*)

Ellen White was talking here of believing God’s Testimonies to the Church but the principle is wide and deep. We need discernment as we study the Scriptures. In *The Desire of Ages*, Ellen White penned these words

“God does not compel men to give up their unbelief. Before them are light and darkness, truth and error. It is for them to decide which they will accept. The human mind is endowed with power to discriminate between right and wrong. God designs that men shall not decide from impulse, but from weight of evidence, carefully comparing scripture with scripture.” (*Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages’, page 458, ‘Among snares’*)

Note her latter words “comparing scripture with scripture”. Regarding discovering whether Christ is truly the Son of God or not, this is something we shall be doing later. In the next paragraph she wrote

“Many are deceived today in the same way as were the Jews.” (*Ibid*)

She explains

“Religious teachers read the Bible in the light of their own understanding and traditions; and the people do not search the Scriptures for themselves, and judge for themselves as to what is truth; but they yield up their judgment, and commit their souls to their leaders.” (*Ibid, page 459*)

This is still very true today. People are still being ‘blinded’ by tradition, also by what their leadership believe. No matter what beliefs others may hold, we should never surrender our ‘thinking’ to others. We must study for ourselves and draw our own conclusions. We must remember too that our eternal lives are at stake. This is something that we cannot afford to trust to others. In 1891 Ellen White penned these words

“Do not hesitate to decide from the weight of evidence. Do not enlist on the side of error, but wholly and entirely on the side of truth.” (*Ellen G. White,*

Review and Herald, 21st July 1891, 'At Willis, Mich.)

Five years previous in an article called 'Intelligent Faith' she White wrote

"There is always sufficient evidence upon which to base an intelligent faith. But God will never remove from any man all occasion for doubts. Those who love to dwell in the atmosphere of doubt and questioning unbelief can have the unenviable privilege. He who turns from the weight of evidence because there are a few things that he cannot make plain to his finite understanding, will be left to the cold, chilling atmosphere of unbelief and skepticism, and will make shipwreck of faith." (*Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times, 30th December 1886, 'Intelligent faith'*)

Again regarding 'intelligent faith' Ellen White wrote

"God would have men believe, not because there is no possibility of doubt, but because there is abundant evidence upon which to base an intelligent faith." (*Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times, 15th July 1886. 'A lesson from the miracle at Bethesda'*)

Current Seventh-day Adventist theology

Regarding the identity of Christ, the current theology of Seventh-day Adventism is expressed in a number of places, one of which is in the book 'The Trinity'. This is a book that was published in 2002, officially authorised by the Seventh-day Adventist Church to specifically address the issues involved in this present trinity debate. It is co-authored by Woodrow Whidden, Jerry Moon and John Reeve. Whilst we cannot quote here all of what this book says concerning the Father/Son debate, suffice to say that on page 97 it reads (this was after expressing the idea that the terminologies 'Father' and 'Son' need not to be taken literally)

"Far from suggesting that the Father generated or begat the Son as some sort of derived or created semigod, the imagery of Father and Son points to the eternal and profound intimacy that has always existed between the first and second persons of the Godhead as divine "equals" through all eternity (past, present, and future)." (*Woodrow Whidden, The Trinity, page 97 'Biblical objections to the trinity'*)

Note first of all that Whidden says that the terms 'Father' and 'Son' have reference to the "eternal and profound intimacy" that exists between the two divine personalities. He does not say that it has anything to do with any ontological oneness between them.

Notice also he refers to these 'Father' and 'Son' concepts as "imagery". Whilst no one will argue that the closeness and the reality of this intimacy is beyond the limited comprehension of humanity, the implication here is that if Christ is said to be a real son (begotten/sourced of the Father), this makes Him "some sort of

derived or created semigod". We shall return to this thought later, suffice to say here that Whidden makes it look as though all who believe in a real Father and a real Son do not believe that Christ is truly God. Throughout this book, this very same thought is projected. This is that if the Son is said to be begotten of God (a true Son), this makes Him some sort of 'lesser god' than the Father, meaning a derived god.

This latter reasoning was never the consensus view of Christianity, neither whilst Ellen White was alive was it the predominant view of Seventh-day Adventists. All of these did say that Christ is truly the divine Son of God but in saying this they were saying that they believed He is God in the highest sense of meaning. Those who entertain the idea that a begotten Son denigrates Christ, lamentably fail to understand the reasoning behind the 'begotten' theology.

Those who say that Christ is a true Son also believe that He is God Himself begotten. These accusations therefore (as Whidden's above) are not only totally unfounded but are probably based on ignorance of what it was (and still is) believed by those whom they are condemning. The book 'The Trinity' maintains that all who regard Christ as being a real Son (begotten/sourced of God) are all denying His full and complete divinity. This means that according to present day Seventh-day Adventist theology, all the trinity creeds of Christendom deny the full and complete deity of Christ. This is quite an allegation.

This is also nonsensical reasoning. I say this because the entire faith of early Christianity was built upon the premise that Christ is begotten of God (a true Son) therefore to say that in believing this they depicted Christ as some sort of created semi-god, is to contradict common sense. As did Seventh-day Adventists whilst Ellen White was alive, early Christianity said that Christ was God Himself in the person of His own Son. This is true 'begotten' theology.

According to current Seventh-day Adventist theology, the only way to express the full and complete divinity of Christ is to say that like the Father He is not begotten. This makes Him to be, because Seventh-day Adventist theology also says that the Holy Spirit is a person like the Father and Son, one of three unbegotten divine individuals. If remaining on its own, this is Tritheism (the belief in three Gods) so how do Seventh-day Adventists arrive at the solution that the Son is the one and the same God as the Father and the Holy Spirit?

This is a very good question. The only answer that can be given is that they say that all three divine personalities constitute one indivisible trinity (three-in-one) structure. This is detailed in their official 'Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology' (see pages 105-204). It is also expressed as the second of their fundamental beliefs (see 'Seventh-day Adventists Believe', pages 17-25).

Ellen White - in harmony with early Christianity and the pioneers of Seventh-day Adventism

Whilst Ellen was alive, Seventh-day Adventists believed and taught the very

same as did the very early Christians (this was before the purity of the Christian faith became tainted with human philosophy). This is because they believed that Christ is truly begotten of God and is therefore God essentially and a true Son. These allegations of Whidden therefore also apply to them. You can read here what the early Christians believed about Christ

The Begotten Series

Whidden is also making this same accusation regarding Ellen White. This is because she believed that Christ is truly begotten of God therefore a true son. In 1894 when in Australia completing the manuscripts for *The Desire of Ages*, she asked the youth of her day

“Who is Christ? -- He is the only begotten Son of the living God. He is to the Father as a word that expresses the thought, -- as a thought made audible. Christ is the word of God. Christ said to Philip, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." His words were the echo of God's words. Christ was the likeness of God, the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person." (*Ellen G. White, Youth's Instructor, 28th June 1894, 'Grow in grace'*)

Notice very importantly that Ellen White differentiates between the One whom she terms “the only begotten Son” and “the living God”. If you missed this point then please read it again. Obviously she is speaking here in terms of pre-existence. Again, as does the Scriptures, she emphasises that the Son is the “express image” of God’s “person”. Note also her opening thought. That just like a word expresses a thought so Christ is to the Father. In other words, Christ is an expression of the Father. As Jesus said to Philip

“...Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? (see John 14:9)

We know that Ellen White believed that Christ is literally begotten of the Father. This is because in 1895 when she was in the process of preparing *The Desire of Ages* she wrote

“A complete offering has been made; for "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son,"-- not a son by creation, as were the angels, nor a son by adoption, as is the forgiven sinner, but a Son begotten in the express image of the Father's person, and in all the brightness of his majesty and glory, one equal with God in authority, dignity, and divine perfection. In him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” (*Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times, 30th May 1895, 'Christ our complete salvation'*)

This was then in keeping with what was then the denominational faith of Seventh-day Adventists. For further details see section fifteen of the *Detailed*

History series here

A Detailed History of the Trinity Doctrine

For those who believe that Ellen White did not mean 'literally begotten' note the words she wrote just 6 weeks later.

"The Eternal Father, the unchangeable one, gave his only begotten Son, tore from his bosom Him who was made in the express image of his person, and sent him down to earth to reveal how greatly he loved mankind." (*Ellen G. White, Review & Herald 9th July 1895 'The Duty of the Minister and the People'*)

Here we can see that instead of using the word 'begotten' to explain Christ's source of being as a separate personality from God (the Father), Ellen White says that He was "made in the express image" of his Father's person. Her previous statement had said "begotten in the express image of the Father's person". In her mind, the word "begotten" was synonymous with "made". This leaves us to conclude that she certainly regarded the Son, as a separate personality from the infinite God (or from the living God) as having a beginning, albeit she maintained that He is God essentially. The "Eternal Father", the "unchangeable one" is obviously the same personality as "the living God" (see above)

Four years later, **the year following** the publication of *The Desire of Ages*, Ellen White penned these words (this was with reference to Jesus saying "before Abraham was I AM" – see John 8:58)

"Here Christ shows them that, altho they might reckon His life to be less than fifty years, yet His divine life could not be reckoned by human computation. The existence of Christ before His incarnation is not measured by figures." (*Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times. 3rd May 1899 'The Word made flesh'*)

This complimented her 'begotten and 'made' statements above. She is saying that Christ's divine life is immeasurable, at least by any standard known to humanity. In 1906 she wrote (which is no different than she had always maintained)

"The world was made by him, "and without him was not anything made that was made." If Christ made all things, he existed before all things. The words spoken in regard to this are so decisive that no one need be left in doubt. Christ was God essentially, and in the highest sense. He was with God from all eternity, God over all, blessed forevermore." (*Ellen G. White, Review and Herald 5th April 1906. 'The Word made Flesh'*)

Her words "from all eternity" were not meant by her to mean 'forever' but an indeterminable span of ages. In the official Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist

theology (this is the official exposition of what Seventh-day Adventists believe), Fernando Canale, in summary of what he has previously said puts it this way

“There is, therefore, no ground within the biblical understanding of the Godhead for the idea of a generation of the Son from the Father.”
(*Fernando Canale, Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopaedia, Volume 12, page 125, ‘The doctrine of God’*)

On the same page

“In the Bible, therefore, no ground is found for the idea that there is an ontological subordination of the Son to the Father or that the divine reality of the Father has in any way a primacy of origin over the divine reality of the Son”. (*Ibid*)

This really does sum up the current official position of the Seventh-day Adventist Church regarding whether Christ is truly the pre-existent Son of God or not. This says that He is not begotten (sourced) of the Father therefore He is not truly a son, at least not in His pre-existence. This obviously contradicts what we have been told through the spirit of prophecy.

Christ fully God

In agreement with early Christianity and later orthodoxy, the predominant belief of early Seventh-day Adventism was that in every sense of meaning, Christ is fully God. They did not regard Him as a lesser personality than the Father but equal to Him. According to their reasoning, the difference between the Father and the Son was that the pre-existent Christ is sourced (begotten) of the Father therefore He is a true Son. This means that He has no existence separate from the Father. This was the testimony of Jesus Himself. When Philip asked Jesus to show the disciples the Father, Jesus said

“ ... Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.” John 14:9-11

Here is the mystery of the oneness between God and Christ. If we have seen Christ we have seen the Father. So how are we to reason this mystery? We shall do as Ellen White says, meaning we shall continue to search through the Scriptures to see what evidence we can find to determine what God has revealed concerning the relationship between Himself and Christ.

In this article we shall begin with the profession of faith upon which Jesus Himself said that His Church would be built. As we shall see, this profession is

that He is the Son of the living God. This is the subject matter of this article. As we study together, let us remember the divine counsel to decide from the weight of evidence (see above). If we do this then we can be sure that God will abundantly bless us.

Jesus the Son of God - The Christian profession of faith

The outspoken Peter made the greatest example of the profession of the Christian faith

“When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?” Matthew 16:13

The disciples answered Jesus by telling Him that some were saying that He was John the Baptist or Elijah whilst others were saying that He was Jeremiah or one of the other prophets. It was following this that Jesus asked the most important question of all. It was not “whom do **others** say that I am” but “**whom say ye that I am?**” (Matthew 16:15). Jesus had now made this a personal question. Just like it does to us today, this demanded a personal confession of faith.

It was Peter in his own distinctive style who was the first to answer.

“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (Matthew 16:16)

This was the second time Peter made such a confession. The first time was after the feeding of the 5000 and the rejection of Jesus in Galilee (see John 6:69).

Peter did not say that Jesus was going to become the Son of God at the resurrection (this is when some say Christ became a son) or as some say He was a son because He was born of the flesh of His mother Mary (meaning at the incarnation), but that He was the “**Son of the living God**”. We need to remember here that Peter had not yet grasped the idea that Jesus was going to die let alone be resurrected.

Through the spirit of prophecy, we have been given a wonderful insight to this personal confession of Peter. Whilst there is too much to quote it all here, what we will quote is that which Ellen White wrote in *The Desire of Ages*. She said on page 412

“From the first, Peter had believed Jesus to be the Messiah.” (*Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, page 412, ‘The foreshadowing of the cross’*)

The Messiahship of Jesus was not a problem area with the disciples. They had already accepted Christ as such. Ellen White continued

“Many others who had been convicted by the preaching of John the Baptist, and had accepted Christ, began to doubt as to John's mission when he was

imprisoned and put to death; and they now doubted that Jesus was the Messiah, for whom they had looked so long. Many of the disciples who had ardently expected Jesus to take His place on David's throne left Him when they perceived that He had no such intention. But Peter and his companions turned not from their allegiance. The vacillating course of those who praised yesterday and condemned today did not destroy the faith of the true follower of the Saviour." *(Ibid)*

Ellen White then said

"Peter declared, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." He waited not for kingly honors to crown his Lord, but accepted Him in His humiliation." *(Ibid)*

Peter had an idea of the condescension of Christ.

"Peter had expressed the faith of the twelve. Yet the disciples were still far from understanding Christ's mission." *(Ibid page 412)*

She then explains why, in the minds of the disciples, this misunderstanding had existed.

"The opposition and misrepresentation of the priests and rulers, while it could not turn them away from Christ, still caused them great perplexity. They did not see their way clearly. The influence of their early training, the teaching of the rabbis, the power of tradition, still intercepted their view of truth. From time to time precious rays of light from Jesus shone upon them, yet often they were like men groping among shadows." *(Ibid)*

This is still very true today. Things 'traditionally believed' still blind eyes to the truth. It is also often that leaders do the misrepresenting. This is why as Seventh-day Adventists we must be very careful not to allow our leadership to do our thinking for us. Just because they believe something to be true, this does not mean that we have to believe it. We are to study the Scriptures for ourselves and allow the Holy Spirit to convict us of what we read. I am sure that our leadership would agree with this reasoning. Ellen White did add though (and this is the very important part of what she wrote)

"But on this day, before they were brought face to face with the great trial of their faith, the Holy Spirit rested upon them in power. For a little time their eyes were turned away from "the things which are seen," to behold "the things which are not seen." 2 Cor. 4:18. Beneath the guise of humanity they discerned the glory of the Son of God." *(Ibid)*

It was because the Holy Spirit rested upon the disciples in power that enabled them to discern the true identity of Christ. As Ellen White said, they "discerned the glory of the Son of God".

Peter did not use the words “Son of God” in any metaphorical (figurative) way but in a sense that was literal. Peter and the others, solely because of the impress of the Holy Spirit, had discerned the divinity of Christ. This is why they termed Him **the Son** of the living God. For obvious reasons they could not say that He was God.

Peter was inspired by the Holy Spirit to make his profession of faith (“**Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God**”). This profession had nothing to do with the incarnation. It was with reference to Christ’s divinity and His pre-existent relationship to His Father. The disciples had seen “**the glory of the Son of God**”. In His beautiful prayer prior to His experience in the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus said

“And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” John 17:5

Peter and the other disciples had discerned this “glory”. It was Christ’s pre-existent glory. Now we can see why Jesus responded to Peter’s confession by saying

“Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.” Matthew 16:17

It was the Holy Spirit directly that had urged this confession from the lips of Peter. This was prior to any New Testament Scripture being written. The only Scriptures that the disciples had available to them were what we term today the ‘Old Testament’. Peter’s profession therefore was direct revelation from God. The Holy Spirit was resting upon him with power. This is why Ellen White wrote

“The truth which Peter had confessed is the foundation of the believer's faith. It is that which Christ Himself has declared to be eternal life. But the possession of this knowledge was no ground for self-glorification. Through no wisdom or goodness of his own had it been revealed to Peter. Never can humanity, of itself, attain to a knowledge of the divine. "It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?" Job 11:8.” (*Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, page 412, ‘The foreshadowing of the cross’*)

She then answers how humanity can have knowledge of these things

“Only the spirit of adoption can reveal to us the deep things of God, which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man." "God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." 1 Cor. 2:9, 10.” (*Ibid*)

Here Ellen White says that it is only when we become the adopted sons and

daughters of God that we can truly understand the deep spiritual things of God. This is why to the world (to the unconverted) these things are foolishness (see 1 Corinthians 2:9-14). She then added

"The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him;" and the fact that Peter discerned the glory of Christ was an evidence that he had been "taught of God." Ps. 25:14; John 6:45. Ah, indeed, "blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee." (*Ibid*)

Peter's profession was direct revelation from God. He did not acquire his understanding by human means. He had been "taught of God". He had been shown the divinity of Christ (His glory) and had therefore proclaimed Him to be the Son of God. As to identity of personality, Jesus was not the infinite God (see John 17:3). He was **the Son** of the infinite God. It was on this profession that Jesus said that the Christian Church would be built. As Jesus said to Peter

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matthew 16:18)

Jesus is the divine Son of God. This is His glory. It is also the Rock upon which the Christian church is built. It is the profession of the Christian faith. All else is secondary.

The Jews understood the claims of Jesus

When Jesus was brought before Caiaphas at the night trial, the high priest asked Him

"I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God." Matthew 26:63

Caiaphas was not asking Jesus if He was the Son of God in any metaphorical (figurative) sense. He was speaking literally. This is why Jesus had been brought before him. He had been accused of blasphemy. He had claimed to be the Son of God. The Jews said that it was because of this He deserved to die.

At the day trial the next morning, the Scriptures reveal that the high priests, elders and scribes came together to question Jesus.

"Art thou the Christ? tell us." Luke 22:67

The Scriptures record that Jesus answered

"If I tell you, ye will not believe: And if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go." Luke 22:67-68

Jesus then told them that hereafter the Son of man would sit on the right hand of

the power of God. After The Scripture then say that after He had said this they together asked Him

“Art thou then the Son of God?” to which Jesus replied, “Ye say that I am”.
Luke 22:70

Luke ends the record of this encounter by saying

“And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth.” Luke 22:71

The questions that Jesus was asked at His trial were with respect to the encounters that He previously had with the Jews. These are such that are recorded in John chapters 5, 8 and 10 etc. We can see therefore that the Jews knew exactly who Jesus was claiming to be. They all knew that in the **literal sense** of its meaning, he was claiming to be the Son of God, hence the question of Caiaphas – “tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God”. If Christ was not being asked this in a literal sense, then the entirety of the accusations do not make any sense.

The Jews knew exactly who Jesus was claiming to be. Let us not make any mistake about it.

“Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.” John 5:18

Jesus continually spoke of God as His Father and Himself as God’s Son. This was no metaphorical (figurative) claim or understanding of this term. Obviously the Jews saw nothing figurative in it. This is why, by His profession to be the Son of God, they regarded Jesus as claiming to be “equal with God”. If they had believed His words to be metaphorical (figurative) they would not have spoken as they did here, neither would they have had just cause to bring Him before Caiaphas on the claim of blasphemy etc. This is only reasonable exegesis.

That the Jews took the claims of Jesus literally is not in question.

“ ... For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.” John 10:33

It can only be said again that the Jews obviously saw nothing metaphorical (figurative) in the claims of Jesus. They said that by them He was making Himself to be God. Jesus also said to the Jews

“Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? John 10:36
As can be seen here, Jesus clearly said that His claim was that He was the Son

of God but the Jews said this was blasphemy. This is why they were going to stone Him. His were literal claims and the Jews realised it. Ellen White had something to say about this encounter of Jesus with the Jews.

“With what firmness and power he uttered these words. The Jews had never before heard such words from human lips, and a convicting influence attended them; for it seemed that divinity flashed through humanity as Jesus said, “I and my Father are one. The words of Christ were full of deep meaning as he put forth the claim that he and the Father were of one substance, possessing the same attributes. The Jews understood his meaning, there was no reason why they should misunderstand, and they took up stones to stone him.” (*Ellen G. White Signs of the Times 20th November 1893, ‘The True Sheep Respond to the Voice of the Shepherd’*)

As can be clearly seen, this “one substance” was with respect to possession of attributes, nothing else. Note too that Ellen White said that there was no reason for the Jews not to understand what Jesus meant. She said “The Jews understood His meaning, there was no reason why they should misunderstand”. She then went on to say

“The Majesty of heaven stood, calmly assured, as a god before his adversaries. Their scowling faces, their hands filled with stones, did not intimidate him. He knew that unseen forces, legions of angels, were round about him, and at one word from his lips they would strike with dismay the throng, should they offer to cast upon him a single stone. He stood before them undaunted. Why did not the stones fly to the mark? (*Ibid*)

Ellen White answered her own question by saying

“It was because divinity flashed through humanity, and they received a revelation, and were convicted that his were no common claims. Their hands relax and the stones fall to the ground. His words had asserted his divinity, but now his personal presence, the light of his eye, the majesty of his attitude, bore witness to the fact that he was the beloved Son of God.” (*Ibid*)

The Jews knew that this claim of Jesus was not in the sense that all who are God’s people are sons (and daughters) of God. Jesus was THE Son of God, the only begotten of God. The Jews knew full well that Christ was making this claim in a special sense and not one that was common. As Ellen White said, because they received a revelation of Christ’s divinity, they were convicted that His were “no common claims”. They had personally witnessed that everything about Him said that “he was the beloved Son of God”.

The Jews had no misunderstanding as regards the claims of Jesus. This is why they said to Pilate

“We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself

the Son of God.” (John 19:7)

If the Jews had regarded this claim to be the Son of God in a common sense, they would not have condemned Jesus to death. It is only reasonable to believe that neither would they have done so if they had thought that He had meant it in some figurative way. They knew that His was a literal claim. This is why they said He ought to die.

A question of Fathers

Jesus was not claiming to be the infinite God in personality but the Son of the infinite God. This we can also see in his wonderful prayer in the seventeenth chapter of John.

“Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” John 17:1-5

Needless to say, Jesus did not regard Himself as “the only true God”. This latter personage was His Father in Heaven (the infinite God). In a previous encounter with the Jews, Jesus had said to them

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.” John 5:19-23

There was no doubting whom Jesus was claiming to be. He was claiming to be the Son of God in the highest sense of its meaning. Obviously He was not using this title in any metaphoric (figurative) sense. With reference to this same dispute, Ellen White wrote in ‘The Desire of Ages’

“Jesus claimed equal rights with God in doing a work equally sacred, and of the same character with that which engaged the Father in heaven. But the Pharisees were still more incensed. He had not only broken the law, according to their understanding, but in calling God “His own Father” had declared Himself equal with God. John 5:18, R. V. (Ellen White, ‘The Desire of Ages’ page 207, ‘Bethesda and the Sanhedrin’)

Notice here that to be specific and in keeping with her own comments, Ellen

White quoted from the Revised Version of the Scriptures and not the KJV. Thus she quoted Jesus as calling God “His own Father”. She would not have been as specific as this if she had quoted the KJV. This version simply says “God was His Father” (John 5:18). She obviously wanted to stress the literalness of this Sonship. She followed this by saying

“The whole nation of the Jews called God their Father, therefore they would not have been so enraged if Christ had represented Himself as standing in the same relation to God. But they accused Him of blasphemy, showing that they understood Him as making this claim in the highest sense.” (*Ibid*)

Through the spirit of prophecy, we are told here that the Jews knew exactly what Jesus was claiming. Note particularly that Ellen White said that the Jews “understood Him as making this claim in the highest sense”. This was not with regards to the incarnation or some forthcoming adoption at the resurrection, neither was it in some figurative sense but was with reference to Christ’s pre-existence.

Christ was indeed the pre-existent Son of God. This is His identity. It is who he is. There is nothing metaphorical (figurative) about it. He really is the Son of God. This is the “highest sense” in which this term can be used and understood. Any other conclusion would not be in the highest sense. Interesting to note is that there are numerous (far too many to quote here) translations of the Scriptures that have “own Father”, particularly the ‘more modern’ versions.

It is also interesting to note a few others that say differently. This is such as the Weymouth and the Mace translations

“On this account then the Jews were all the more eager to put Him to death -- because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also spoke of God as being in a special sense His Father, thus putting Himself on a level with God.”
John 5:18 Weymouth

“therefore the Jews were the more eager to kill him, because he had not only violated the sabbath, but likewise, because he had said that God was his proper father, making himself equal with God.” Mace translation (1729)

In 1901 in the Review and Herald Ellen White again commented on this incident

“The whole nation called God their Father, and if Jesus had done this in the same sense in which they did, the Pharisees would not have been so enraged. But they accused Jesus of blasphemy, showing that they understood that Christ claimed God as His Father in the very highest sense.” (*Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, 5th March 1901, ‘Lessons from the Christ-life’*)

Can this be put more plainly? Christ was the Son of God in the “very highest

sense” of its meaning. There is nothing metaphorical (figurative) about it. How much more evidence do we need to believe that Christ really is the Son of God? She then said

“Christ threw back the charge of blasphemy, with the words, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that himself doeth." My authority for the work that I am doing, He said, is the fact that I am God's Son, one with Him in nature, will, and purpose. I co-operate with Him in His work. My Father loves me, and communicates to me all His counsels. Nothing is planned by the Father in heaven that is not fully opened to the Son." (*Ibid*)

Is there really need to say any more?

The “I am”

At Sinai, when God commanded Moses to gather around the mount those whom He had led out of Egypt, Christ was there beside Him.

“The earth shook and trembled as if convulsed, and the thunder peals were caught up in reverberations from peak to peak, far and near. The stately tread of the Lord Jehovah and of his Son was upon that mountain.” (*Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times, 11th December 1879, ‘Christ’s followers the light of the world’*)

Christ claimed this Sonship with God. This was when in what is probably the most well known encounter that Jesus had with the Jews He said to them

“... Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.” (John 8:58)

Whilst we will not be going into detail here regarding these words of Jesus it important to note that this encounter concerned ‘fathers’. The Jews claimed that God was their Father but Jesus disagreed. He had said that they were of their father the devil.

By the way that Jesus used the term “I am”, the Jews obviously knew what Jesus was claiming. We know this because the Scriptures tell us (this was in response to the above words of Jesus)

“Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.” John 8:59

In commenting on this encounter, Ellen White wrote in *The Desire of Ages*

“Because He was, and avowed Himself to be, the Son of God, they were

bent on destroying Him. Now many of the people, siding with the priests and rabbis, took up stones to cast at Him. "But Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by." (Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 470, 'The light of life')

She then added

"The Light was shining in darkness; but "the darkness apprehended it not." John 1:5, R. V." (*Ibid*)

In this world today and in abundance, this same darkness still exists. In comparison to its total population, there are so very few who actually believe that Jesus really is the divine Son of God. This is even though He "avowed Himself" to be so. Will we not believe His personal testimony?

The Son of God (Including Ellen White comments)

by Terry Hill

Chapter two

Testimonies and challenges

The personal testimony of Jesus

Jesus knew exactly what His relationship was with God. When He heard that the Jews had cast out from the temple the man whose sight He had earlier restored, He found him again and said to him

"Dost thou believe on the Son of God? John 9:35

The man answered Jesus by asking "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? John 9:36

The Scriptures record

"And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee." John 9:37

Do we wish to argue with Jesus Himself? He very clearly said that He is the Son of God. This was no figurative claim. It was very real and it was literal. The blind man was told that the one that had healed him was the Son of God. Quite obviously this man who had been blind would only have understood this in a literal sense. In more ways than one, his eyes were now open.

There is another experience of Jesus where He claimed to be the divine Son of God. This was when He heard that His friend Lazarus was sick. Jesus said to His disciples regarding that sickness

“This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.” John 11:4

Again Jesus refers to Himself as the Son of God. He was clearly not using this title to simply denote the intimacy of relationship that He had with His Father. Throughout His life on earth, Jesus claimed to be the Son of God. This is why the Jews said He was a blasphemer. Perhaps the best known time is when He said to Nicodemus

“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. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” John 3:16-18

We discussed the Greek word ‘monogenes’ translated here “only begotten” (meaning the only one of its kind that has come to be) in section four of the ‘Begotten Series’ so we will not comment again here, suffice to say that if Jesus is really the Son of God then He must be begotten (sourced) of God. As we noted in [section two](#) and [section three](#) of the same series, this was the very same reasoning of early Christians.

Challenged by Satan

Jesus had no problems with His own identity (who He was) but it did concern Satan. When he came to Jesus, tempting Him to doubt His true identity, he said, “If thou be the Son of God” (see [Matthew 4:6](#)). It was on the point of Sonship that the devil challenged Jesus. Prove who you are he said, prove that you really are the Son of God. Ellen White had something interesting to say about this encounter.

“Not without a struggle could Jesus listen in silence to the arch-deceiver. But the Son of God was not to prove His divinity to Satan, or to explain the reason of His humiliation. By conceding to the demands of the rebel, nothing for the good of man or the glory of God would be gained. Had Christ complied with the suggestion of the enemy, Satan would still have said, Show me a sign that I may believe you to be the Son of God.” (*Ellen White, ‘The Desire of Ages. Page 119, ‘The temptation’*)

This was at the very beginning of the ministry of Jesus. Satan knew that Jesus regarded Himself as the Son of God.

Notice here that Satan said “If thou be the Son of God” whilst Ellen White said

“But the Son of God was not to prove His divinity to Satan”. Obviously, in the eyes of Ellen White, the terminology “Son of God” was synonymous with “divinity”. This is very important to note.

Satan was challenging Jesus to display His powers of divinity. This, according to him, would have proved that He was the Son of God. He was in fact attempting to make Jesus doubt His Father’s testimony. This testimony was that He was the Son of God.

“The words from heaven, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17), were still sounding in the ears of Satan. But he was determined to make Christ disbelieve this testimony. The word of God was Christ's assurance of His divine mission. He had come to live as a man among men, and it was the word that declared His connection with heaven. It was Satan's purpose to cause Him to doubt that word. If Christ's confidence in God could be shaken, Satan knew that the victory in the whole controversy would be his. He could overcome Jesus. He hoped that under the force of despondency and extreme hunger, Christ would lose faith in His Father, and work a miracle in His own behalf. Had He done this, the plan of salvation would have been broken.” (*Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, page 119, 'The temptation'*)

Here can be seen the entire point of Satan’s challenge. He was urging Christ to prove His Sonship, meaning to prove His divinity. If we miss this point we miss everything about the temptation. Obviously the devil never meant these words to be metaphorical (representative of the loving relationship that Jesus had with the Father). This would not make any sense at all. Ellen White also said of Christ’s temptation in the wilderness

“In the first temptation Satan had said, "If Thou art the Son of God." Evidence was now given him that Jesus was indeed all that He claimed to be. Divinity flashed through humanity as the Saviour said, "Get thee behind Me, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." With such power were these words spoken that Satan left the battle-field a conquered foe.” (*Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times, 11th April 1900, 'Victory over temptation'*)

Satan knew that Jesus claimed to be the divine Son of God and had asked Him to prove it. He did receive the evidence for which he was looking but obviously it did not come to him in the way that he had expected.

The testimony of demons

Satan’s fellow angels also knew the identity of Jesus. With their leader they too had heard of the testimony of God the Father (Matthew 3:17). They said to Jesus

“What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?” Matthew 8:29

In His pre-existence, these demons had known Jesus as the divine Son of God. They were the fallen angels. Christ had once been their beloved commander, at least up until the time they had been deceived by Lucifer. Now they were encountering Him in His incarnate state.

As we have been told through the spirit of prophecy

“Well did Satan know who Christ was.” (*Ellen G. White, Bible Echo, 23rd July 1900, ‘Tempted in all points’*)

Ellen White then added

“When the Saviour went to Gadara, the evil spirits in the two madmen there cried out, “What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of God? (*Ibid*)

The Scriptures also tell us

“And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God.” Mark 3:11

This same type of unclean spirit said to Christ

“What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not.” Mark 5:7

They also said of Jesus

“Thou art Christ the Son of God.” Luke 4:41

Even in His incarnation, these demons had no problems identifying Jesus. They realised His true identity. Just like all the others we have noted, they did not use this term “Son of God” in any figurative sense. Certainly they were not using this term simply as an expression of God’s love for the Son or the intimacy of relationship that the Father had with the Son. This would be a totally ridiculous conclusion to draw. As Ellen White wrote (after referring to the love shown by Jesus in healing people)

“He also cast out many demons, who, in leaving their victims, acknowledged Christ, saying, “Thou art the Son of God.” (*Ellen G. White, Volume 2 Spirit of Prophecy, page 201, ‘Sermon on the Mount’*)

This in turn begs a question. If the demons know and confess that Christ is truly the Son of God, then why do not many Christians know and confess it today, particularly Seventh-day Adventist Christians?

John the Baptist

John the Baptist had also said when in discussion with his own followers (here he was making reference to the baptism of Jesus)

“I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.” John 1:32-33

The one whom God raised up (the voice crying in the wilderness) was to pave the way and herald the first advent of Christ. John claimed that Jesus is the Son of God. There is no reason not to believe that all those who heard John’s claims would only have understood this in a literal sense. John himself had heard the Father’s testimony (Matthew 3:17).

The disciples

Nathanael’s initial encounter with Christ is a very interesting one. When Jesus told him that He (Jesus) had seen him under the fig tree he answered

“Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.” John 1:49

Interesting to note is that Ellen White said of Nathanael’s experience

“If Nathanael had trusted to the rabbis for guidance, he would never have found Jesus. It was by seeing and judging for himself that he became a disciple.” (*Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, page 140, ‘We have found the Messiah’*)

This is obviously counsel for us today. If we are to find the true Christ we must not rely upon others for what we believe but search the Scriptures for ourselves. This is what we are doing here in this study. As Ellen White later said

“While they trust to the guidance of human authority, none will come to a saving knowledge of the truth. Like Nathanael, we need to study God’s word for ourselves, and pray for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. He who saw Nathanael under the fig tree will see us in the secret place of prayer. Angels from the world of light are near to those who in humility seek for divine guidance.” (*Ibid page 141*)

Again Ellen White said of Nathanael (this is really very interesting)

“He [Nathanael] had advanced into more perfect light than had Philip; his perception went farther; his faith meant more; for he saw in Jesus of Nazareth the Son of God.” (*Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times, 24th March 1898, ‘In the master’s service’*)

So what had Philip acknowledged concerning Jesus?

“Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”
John 1:44-45

Philip had told Nathanael that he had found the promised Messiah of the Scriptures but as Ellen White said, Nathanael had gone further in his profession and had recognised Him as “the Son of God”. This is very interesting. It shows that in the understanding of Ellen White, the Messiahship of Jesus (the one whom Moses spoke of in the Scriptures) and His divine Sonship were two different things. I say this because some say that ‘Son of God’ is only a metaphoric term for ‘messiah’. In the reasoning of Ellen White it was not.

Martha also said to Jesus (this was at the resurrection of her brother Lazarus)

“Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.” John 11:27

The word “Christ” (Gr ‘christos’) means the anointed one. Like Nathanael, Martha was saying here that she believed that Jesus was not only the anointed one (the promised Messiah – the Christ) but also the “Son of God”.

When the disciples saw Jesus calm the winds on the Sea of Galilee they said to Him

“Of a truth thou art the Son of God”. Matthew 14:33

As we noted above, so we will not comment again here, it was through the direct revelation of the Holy Spirit that God Himself had revealed to the disciples the true identity of Jesus. As Seventh-day Adventists, we need that same revelation today.

The revilers at the cross

Those who reviled Jesus at the cross knew very well who He claimed to be.

“Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.” Matthew 27:40

“He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.” Matthew 27:43

These revilers knew that Jesus had claimed to be the Son of God. This was their accusation against Him. This is why they said He was a blasphemer and deserved to die. It should go without saying that they were not saying these words because of the loving relationship that Jesus claimed to have had with God; neither did they say them in any metaphorical sense. This much again is only reasonably obvious.

A Pagan's confession

When Jesus died, even a man the Jews regarded as a pagan recognized the true identity of Jesus.

“Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.” Matthew 27:54

Was this Roman soldier saying this in any metaphorical sense? I would hardly think so. He knew exactly why the Jews had wanted Jesus crucified. He knew exactly who it was that they believed Jesus claimed to be. This is why he said

“Truly this was the Son of God”.

Ellen White commented

“These words were said in no whispered tones. All eyes were turned to see whence they came. Who had spoken? It was the centurion, the Roman soldier. The divine patience of the Saviour, and His sudden death, with the cry of victory upon His lips, had impressed this heathen. In the bruised, broken body hanging upon the cross, the centurion recognized the form of the Son of God. He could not refrain from confessing his faith. Thus again evidence was given that our Redeemer was to see of the travail of His soul. Upon the very day of His death, three men, differing widely from one another, had declared their faith, -- he who commanded the Roman guard, he who bore the cross of the Saviour, and he who died upon the cross at His side” (*Ellen White, The Desire of Ages, page 770, 'In Joseph's tomb', see also Spirit of Prophecy, Volume 3, 'Calvary', 1878*)

The purpose of John's gospel

John wrote his gospel just as the 1st century was drawing to a close. As I have said previously, this I believe was to refute the heresies that were then being attempted to be brought into the Christian Church. John gave his overall purpose for writing his gospel by saying

“And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.” John 20:31

The disputes that Jesus experienced with the Jews; the words that Jesus spoke to those He encountered (Jews and non-Jews); the miracles documented; the scenes of the death and resurrection of Jesus; were recorded by this beloved disciple to achieve the one end. It was to prove that Jesus was indeed the divine Son of God.

Please take very careful note of what I say next because it is very important.

There are some who say that the term 'Son of God' (like the word 'begotten') is only with respect to the incarnation and the miracle birth but if this were true then John made a complete 'pig's ear' of His gospel. I say this because John was led to detail all the signs that show that Jesus is the Son of God (this is the whole point of his gospel) but he makes no reference to the virgin birth or the events at Bethlehem associated with the incarnation. Under the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit, John did not regard the events at Bethlehem as one of the signs that shows that Jesus is the divine Son of God. Again this is only reasonable biblical exegesis.

There are those that say that the words 'only begotten' as applied to Christ are applicable only because of the events of the incarnation but as we can see, this claim would be the result of very poor scholarship. Nowhere either in the Scriptures is the term 'monogenes' (the only one of its kind caused to be) ever found applied to the incarnation. We have seen also that Ellen White said very clearly that Christ was begotten of His Father in eternity (see [section five](#) of the '[Begotten Series](#)'). We therefore must not follow the reasoning that begotten has application to the events of Bethlehem and the virgin birth etc. There is no evidence to support or foster such a belief. Even Mark wrote his gospel by beginning

["The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" Mark 1:1](#)

Like John the gospel writer, Mark never made any reference to the virgin birth or any of the events surrounding it. Obviously he was not led to believe this as crucial to understanding that Jesus is the divine Son of God.

The personal testimony of the Father

The words that Jesus heard His Father speak at His baptism were very precious to Him. This was when the Saviour heard it said in an audible voice from Heaven

["This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Mathew 3:17](#)

What greater testimony could there be than this one? Will we believe it though? Will we take God at His word and believe that Christ really is His Son? We need to remember here that it was a disbelief in God's word that brought about the first sin in the Garden of Eden.

Ellen White said of these words

["These words of confirmation were given to inspire faith in those who witnessed the scene, and to strengthen the Saviour for His mission. Notwithstanding that the sins of a guilty world were laid upon Christ, notwithstanding the humiliation of taking upon Himself our fallen nature, the](#)

voice from heaven declared Him to be the Son of the Eternal.” (*Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, page 112, ‘The Baptism’*)

By “the Eternal”, Ellen White is referring to the Father. We shall see later that she very often referred to Him as the infinite God. This was in contrast to Jesus whom she often described as the Son of the infinite God (here “the Son of the Eternal”).

Not only at the baptism of Jesus was the voice of the Father heard but also at the transfiguration. The Scriptures record

“While he [Peter] yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold 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

It must therefore be exactly as Ellen White said

“The more we think about Christ's becoming a babe here on earth, the more wonderful it appears. How can it be that the helpless babe in Bethlehem's manger is still the divine Son of God?” (*Ellen G. White, Youth's Instructor 21st November 1895*)

Notice her words regarding the baby Jesus. She said that it was wonderment that this child was “still the divine Son of God”. To anyone who is honestly seeking the truth, this must be overwhelming convincing that Ellen White believed that this baby, in His pre-existence, was the divine Son of God. How else is it possible to understand what she was saying here? She was not saying that He was the Son of God only because of the incarnation.

She also said in 1905 concerning Christ

“In His incarnation He gained in a new sense the title of the Son of God. Said the angel to Mary, “The power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35). While the Son of a human being, He became the Son of God in a new sense. Thus He stood in our world -- the Son of God, yet allied by birth to the human race. (*Ellen G. White, Selected Messages book 1 page 226 also Signs of the Times August 2nd 1905*)

Clearly Ellen White was in agreement with Scripture that Christ has always been the Son of God. This therefore was not a position to which He eventually achieved either at the incarnation or at the resurrection or at some other time during His earthly ministry (like adoptionism). It was one that He had held from the beginning with God His Father. This is why John began his gospel with the words

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” John 1:1

Interestingly, after quoting these verses, she wrote in 1903

“How precious are these words! By them some have been led to believe in Christ as the Son of God....The writer of these words [John] plainly shows that Jesus Christ is one with the Father. Christ is called the Word. He is the first-begotten of the Father.” (*Ellen G. White, Ms 111 1903, 'October 22nd 1903, That they may be one; As we are one'*)

Current claims by the Seventh-day Adventist Church

The claim of the Seventh-day Adventist Church today is that Christ, in His pre-existence, is not really the Son of God. This they say is because He is not begotten (sourced) of God. In fact they say that all references to Him being a Son is only metaphorical (figurative). As Woodrow Whidden puts it in the Seventh-day Adventist publication ‘The Trinity’

“Is it not quite apparent that the problem texts become problems only when one assumes an exclusively literalistic interpretation of such expressions as “Father,” “Son,” “Firstborn,” “Only Begotten,” “Begotten,” and so forth? Does not such literalism go against the mainly figurative or metaphorical meaning that the figurative use when referring to the persons of the Godhead?” (*Woodrow Whidden, The Trinity, 'Biblical objections to the trinity' page 106, 2002*)

Regarding the personalities of the Godhead, we are informed here of the official position of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This is that the Father is not really a father whilst the Son is not really a son. This is totally contrary to what was believed by early Christians. It is also totally contrary to what was believed by early Seventh-day Adventists. It is also, as we have seen in this article, totally contrary to the evidence of the Scriptures and the writings of Ellen White. The claim here is that the terms ‘Father’, ‘Son’ and ‘Holy Spirit’ are all metaphorical (figurative). As we have seen from our studies of God’s Word, this cannot be true. On page 94 Whidden wrote

“Another important consideration involves how we interpret the Bible. Here the issue pertains to whether we should interpret some passages literally or whether we may treat them more figuratively. Maybe we could illustrate it this way. While we often refer to Jesus as the Son and frequently call the first person of the Godhead the Father, do we really want to take such expressions in a totally literal way? Or would it be more appropriate to interpret them in a more metaphorical way that draws on selective aspects of sonship and fatherhood?” (*Ibid*)

Here again it is being said that the terms used to describe the members of the Godhead are only used to denote “selective aspects” of a father/son relationship. In other words, the Father is not really a father, the Son is not really a son, and the Holy Spirit is not really a holy spirit. They are said to be just metaphorical

terms. Whidden continues by saying

“For instance, if one wants to totally literalize “Father,” would this mean that there must be an eternal heavenly “Mother of God” (maybe the Holy Spirit)

Another illustration or two should clarify the point. One anti-Trinitarian has accused Trinitarians of denying that Jesus is a “true” Son of God (he means literal), since they reject the idea that the Son was literally generated as a divine being (called Son) by God the Father. Of course he uses “generate” to mean to beget a son in the same sense that earthly fathers procreate. But if we employed the same type of literal interpretation, since Jesus in John 15:1 clearly claims that He is the “true vine,” must we then literally understand Jesus to be a grapevine? Most obviously, Jesus is here speaking figuratively or illustratively. Could it be the same case with the expressions “Father” and “Son”? (*Ibid*)

Many would regard Whidden’s words as an attempt to ridicule (deride) those who believe that the Son is truly begotten of the Father and is therefore truly a son. If this is true, this would not only be ridiculing the anti-trinitarians but also the trinitarians as well, at least those who believe that the Son is begotten. These would include of course all those who believe the orthodox trinity doctrine to be true. This is because the orthodox version is totally dependant on the Son being begotten of the Father.

It would also mean ridiculing the pioneers of Seventh-day Adventism, including Ellen White. This is because they all believed that Christ is God’s true Son, begotten of God in eternity.

Literal or figurative?

So how do we know whether something in the Scriptures should be taken literally or figuratively?

I have always maintained that unless something is blatantly figurative, like Jesus referring to Himself as the living bread or as a door or even a vine (see John 6:51, John 10:7, John 15:5), it should be taken literally. Obviously trees do not clap their hands (see Isaiah 55:12). In most cases it is not too difficult to differentiate between the literal and the figurative. This is unless we are talking in terms of prophecy and then at times it does become that much more difficult.

This question as to “[how we interpret the Bible](#)” (see Whidden’s remarks above), whether it be literally or figuratively, has been answered very clearly by Ellen White. In the ‘Great Controversy’ she wrote

“It is the first and highest duty of every rational being to learn from the Scriptures what is truth, and then to walk in the light and encourage others to follow his example. We should day by day study the Bible diligently, weighing every thought and comparing scripture with scripture. With divine

help we are to form our opinions for ourselves as we are to answer for ourselves before God.

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." (*Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, page 598, 'The Scriptures a safeguard'*)

This is very relevant to our present study.

She then adds

"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 or figure is employed. Christ has given the promise: "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." John 7:17. 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."
(*Ibid*)

In keeping with this counsel from the spirit of prophecy, we must ask ourselves if the term 'Son of God', as we have seen it for ourselves as applied to Christ in the Scriptures, also in the writings of Ellen White, should be taken literally or figuratively. We need therefore to do some 'sanctified reasoning' together.

When God said in His own voice that Jesus was His Son, why should those who heard Him not have taken Him literally? We must also ask the same of Jesus Himself. He said very clearly that He was the Son of God. Did He not mean it literally? If not, why not?

The reason why I ask this is because it was His profession that caused such a stir amongst the Jews. In fact it was what led Him to be crucified. Jesus would not have caused unnecessary uproar. The Jews obviously believed He meant it literally. This is why they said He had blasphemed and made Himself equal with God. They even said that by calling Himself the Son of God He was making Himself God. This is why they wanted Him put to death. Are we to believe that they misunderstood what Jesus was saying and that He did not correct them? As we have seen, Ellen White said that they understood perfectly whom Jesus was claiming to be (see above). This is confirmation from the spirit of prophecy that Jesus had it correct, also that the Jews had it correct. The incarnate Christ may not have been God Himself but He was manifesting God in His flesh.

Some say that the phrase 'Son of God' is only representative of the love that the Son has for the Father and vice versa etc (see Whidden's remarks above). This

does not make any sense at all. Why should this have brought about such a violent reaction from the Jews? Why would that make them want to kill Him?

What about the demons and even the devil himself, also those that mocked Him at the cross? They all called Jesus the Son of God. In fact this is why His accusers said He deserved to die. They said that by these claims He was claiming to be equal with God. Obviously none of these were using this term to show the love that the Father and Son have for each other. They obviously believed Christ meant it literally. To believe that the demons and even the devil himself used the term Son of God to show the love between God and Christ is to reason to the point of absolute absurdity.

There is something else important to remember here. We noted above that Whidden said when referring to terminologies such as Father and Son (note the emphasis)

“Far from suggesting that the Father generated or begat the Son as some sort of derived or created semigod, the imagery of Father and Son points to the eternal and profound intimacy that has always existed between the first and second persons of the Godhead as divine “equals” through all eternity (past, present, and future).” (*Woodrow Whidden, The Trinity, page 97 ‘Biblical objections to the trinity’*)

A few pages later he said

“Does not such literalism go against the mainly figurative or metaphorical meaning that the Bible writers use when referring to the persons of the Godhead?” (*Ibid page 106*)

We need to do some more reasoning together here.

Here Whidden is saying that it was the “Bible writers” who had selected such terms as Father and Son but he is leading his readers to reason incorrectly. I say this because he makes it look as though the writers of the Scriptures had chosen these terminologies when in reality they did not choose them at all.

The words ‘Father’ and ‘Son’ were the words that others had used when referring to Christ. Putting this in another way, the Bible writers were simply recording what others **had actually said**. They were not just choosing words for themselves. This was when the Father called Jesus His Son, the Son called God His Father and the demons called Jesus the Son of God etc. It was also when Jesus referred to Himself as the Son of God, as did the disciples and others.

The terms ‘Father’ and ‘Son’ therefore were not words selected by the Bible writers to describe the loving relationship between these two (which is what Whidden is saying above) but were **the actual words that others used** when referring to God and Christ. This included the words that God and Christ had

actually spoken. This is obviously very important to realise.

When everything is taken into account (weighing up all the evidence), we must ask if the term Son of God is to be taken literally or figuratively? I believe the answer to be obvious. By the weight of evidence that we find in the Scriptures, (also in the writings of Ellen White) also if we are to remain honest in our deliberations, we must take it literally. Jesus really is the Son of God and God really is His Father. As Ellen White said in 1904

“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. All the counsels of God are opened to His Son.” (*Ellen G. White, 8th Volume Testimonies, page 268, ‘The Essential Knowledge’*)

The Son of the infinite God

It was said previously that we would bring quotations from the spirit of prophecy saying that Christ is the Son of the infinite God. Whilst they cannot all be quoted here, we shall indulge just a few. Note that they all speak of Christ being a son before He vacated heaven and exiled Himself from His Father. These are such as

“It was necessary that the Son of the infinite God should come to be the light of the world, to be the fountain of healing mercy to a lost race.” (*Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, 20th January 1891, ‘Co-operation with Christ’*)

The Son is here spoken of as being a son in His pre-existence, meaning prior to Him coming to earth. Note Ellen White refers to the Father as “the infinite God” thus clearly delineating between these two divine personalities.

“The One appointed in the counsels of heaven came to the earth as an instructor. He was no less a being than the Creator of the world, the Son of the Infinite God.” (*Ellen G. White, Special Testimonies on Education, page 173, 1897*)

Nine years after the publication of her supposedly trinitarian *The Desire of Ages* she continued to say (note also the title of the article)

“The Son of the infinite God came to this earth, and honoured it with His presence.” (*Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, 6th June 1907, ‘No other Gods before me’*)

The following quotes are also very interesting

“The deep necessity of man for a divine teacher was known in heaven. The pity and sympathy of God were exercised in behalf of man, fallen and bound to Satan's chariot car; and when the fulness of time was come, he sent forth his Son. The One appointed in the counsels of heaven came to

the earth as an instructor. He was no less a being than the Creator of the world, the Son of the Infinite God. The rich benevolence of God gave him to our world; and to meet the necessities of humanity, he took on him human nature." (*Ellen G. White, Special Testimonies on education, page 173, 1897*)

"Although the only begotten Son of the infinite God humbled Himself, and took upon Him humanity, yet, under trial and test, his faith was equal to the proving of temptation on behalf of humanity. Jesus passed over the ground upon which Adam had fallen, and his feet did not stumble. Satan left the field a vanquished foe, peremptorily dismissed." (*Ellen G. White, Bible Echo, 1st December 1893, Victory in temptation through Christ*)

"Was not Christ the greatest teacher the world ever knew? Was He not the Son of the infinite God? and yet He said, "I do nothing of Myself." "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of Myself, but My Father which dwelleth in Me, He doeth the work."" (*Ellen G. White, Bible Echo, 18th September 1899, Letter from Ellen White when in Australia to the shareholders*)

"The Son of the infinite God, the Lord of life and glory, descended in humiliation to the life of the lowliest, that no one might feel himself excluded from his presence. He made himself accessible to all. He did not select a favored few with whom to associate and ignore all others. It grieves the Spirit of God when conservatism shuts man away from his fellow-man, especially when it is found among those who profess to be his children." (*Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, 22nd December 1891, 'No caste in Christ'*)

I believe the most overwhelming support that Ellen White gave to the belief that in eternity Christ was begotten of God was when she was in Australia.

In 1893, Ellen White spoke of the prejudice that Seventh-day Adventists were encountering in Australia and New Zealand. In the Review and Herald in 1893 she related that the church had attempted to hire a hall in order to hold some meetings but the man in charge of letting the hall (a schoolteacher) refused them permission. The reason he gave was that Seventh-day Adventists did not accept that Christ was divine. Ellen White reported

"This man may not have known what our faith is on this point, but he was not left in ignorance. He was informed that there is not a people on earth who hold more firmly to the truth of Christ's pre-existence than do Seventh-day Adventists. But the answer was given that they did not want that the doctrines of Seventh-day Adventists should be promulgated in that community. So the door was closed." (*Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, 5th December 1893, 'An appeal for the Australasian field'*)

Whoever read this, whether Seventh-day Adventist or otherwise, could have only accepted Ellen White as saying that what the Seventh-day Adventist Church was then teaching about Christ's pre-existence was the truth. What else could she have meant?

I will not here attempt to prove what the Seventh-day Adventist Church was then teaching concerning Christ's pre-existence. This is because it is very well recorded and very much common knowledge. It was believed that in eternity Christ was begotten of God therefore He is truly the Son of God. This begotten belief also maintained that He was God. This same belief remained the official faith of SDA's through to the 1940's and beyond. In fact we know that in 1936, which was 21 years after the death of Ellen White, the General Conference declared it to be the official faith of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. You can read about this here.

[The Official 1936 official beliefs of SDA's](#)

Further witness

Apart from the places we have already noted, there are many more verses of Scripture where Jesus is referred to as the Son of God. Whilst there are far too many to include here, suffice to note that some are Acts 9:20, Romans 1:4, 2 Corinthians 1:19, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 4:13, Hebrews 4:14, 6:6, 7:3, 10:29 and Revelation 2:18. This is besides where John in his first letter says nine times that Christ is the Son of God.

Perhaps two of the latter we need to quote here. They are obviously very important. John wrote these when heresies were in abundance concerning Christ. The first says

["Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" 1 John 5:5](#)

As we noted above (Peter's confession), this is the essence of the Christian faith. It is the belief that Jesus is the divine Son of God. According to the Word of God, this is the faith that overcomes. John also wrote

["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 5:10](#)

The testimony of the Scripture through and through is that Christ is truly the Son of God. This is the witness that all those who belong to God have in him or her self.

Before summarising this presentation, I would quote you one more experience from Scripture. This was Philip's encounter with the Ethiopian eunuch.

The Scriptures tell us that the Spirit led this disciple to the Ethiopian's chariot. He asked the Ethiopian if he understood what he was reading (Isaiah chapter 53) but the reply he received was that he could not understand without someone to help him. The Ethiopian asked Philip as to whom it was that this passage of Scripture was referring and Philip began to preach to him concerning Christ. The Scriptures then tell us

“And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” Acts 8:36-38

This was the confession of early Christianity. It was that which the apostle Paul preached in the synagogues immediately following His miraculous conversion (Acts 9:20). It was and still is today, that Jesus is indeed “the Son of God”. Today we are faced with the temptation to believe that Christ is not really the Son of God. By specious reasoning, some of today's theologians, even Seventh-day Adventist theologians, are saying that He is not a true Son. This is no different than the temptation that Jesus faced when He was here on earth. As Ellen White wrote regarding Satan taking Him up into a high mountain and promising Him the kingdoms of this world

“But Christ saw that which Satan tried to veil from his eyes, and that which he flattered himself he had done. Christ had not exchanged his divinity for humanity; but he had clothed his divinity in humanity, and he gave Satan the evidence for which he had asked, -- showed him that he was the Son of God.” (*Ellen G. White, Review & Herald. 29th October 1895*)

Ellen White also said in 1901 concerning Jesus

“He was God in human flesh, and He could not but work the works of God. Unbelief, prejudice, and jealousy beat about Him, and if His humanity had not been united with divinity, He would have failed and become discouraged. At times His divinity flashed through humanity, and He stood forth as the Son of God, His veil of flesh too transparent to hide His majesty. But the men who claimed to be the expositors of the prophecies refused to believe that He was the Christ. Satan had control of their minds, and they utterly refused to acknowledge the divinity of Jesus of Nazareth.” (*Ellen G. White, Review & Herald 26th March 1901. 'Lessons from the Christ-life'*)

In summary

In summary, it must not be said that Christ is the Son of God only in a metaphorical (figurative) sense. The evidence is totally overwhelming that His pre-existent Sonship should be taken literally. If we do not take it literally, then I truly believe that we shall be at variance with both the testimony of the Scriptures and the testimony of Jesus as He spoke through Ellen White. As Ellen White

said in 1879

“The Father did not yield up his dearly beloved Son without a struggle, whether to let guilty man perish or to give his Son to die for the lost race. It was impossible for God to change his law, or give up the smallest part of its claims, in order to save man; therefore he suffered his Son to die for man's transgression.” (*Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times, 30th January 1879, ‘The great controversy: The plan of salvation’*)

“The plan of salvation had been laid before the creation of the earth; for Christ is a lamb "foreordained before the foundation of the world"; yet it was a struggle, even with the King of the universe, to yield up His Son to die for the guilty race. But "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." O, the mystery of redemption! the love of God for a world that did not love Him! Who can know the depths of that love which "passeth knowledge"? Through endless ages, immortal minds, seeking to comprehend the mystery of that incomprehensible love, will wonder and adore.” (*Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times, 4th November 1908, ‘When sin entered’, see also Patriarchs and Prophets, ‘The plan of redemption, page 63, 1890*)

As we close this article, here is something to ponder that I believe is very important. When God laid Moses in the dust, it was not His purpose that His servant should remain in the grave. Moses had been a faithful servant of God. Christ raised him to life even before his body saw corruption. Satan was angry and he received a rebuke. As the Scriptures say

“Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.” Jude 1:9

Ellen White in commenting on this wrote

“Moses passed through death, but Michael came down and gave him life before his body had seen corruption. Satan tried to hold the body, claiming it as his; but Michael resurrected Moses and took him to heaven.” (*Ellen G. White, Early Writings, Spiritual Gifts, page 164, 1882, see also Signs of the Times, 31st March 1881, ‘The death of Moses, also Spiritual Gifts Volume 1, 1858, also Spiritual Gifts 4A 1864, also Spirit of Prophecy Volume 1 1870*)

It was “Michael” (Christ) that raised Moses from the grave but notice Ellen White’s next words (this is the part I said was important).

“Satan railed bitterly against God, denouncing Him as unjust in permitting his prey to be taken from him; but Christ did not rebuke His adversary, though it was through his temptation that the servant of God had fallen.”

(Ibid)

So if Christ (Michael) did not rebuke Satan then who did?

“He [Christ] meekly referred him to His Father, saying, "The Lord rebuke thee." *(Ibid)*

Here we are talking in terms of over ***1400 years before the incarnation*** and Christ, like a humble Son, does not rebuke Satan Himself but refers him instead to His Father. Is there any real need to say any more?

Perhaps just one more statement from the spirit of prophecy will suffice.

Throughout His earthy life, Jesus would not succumb to temptation. As an obedient Son, He waited for His Father to tell Him what to do. This was in total harmony as it was in His pre-existence. Nothing in this respect had changed. As Ellen White said when referring to Christ's temptation in the wilderness (note that Ellen White penned these words after the publication of the *The Desire of Ages*)

“Christ's time to show His divine power had not yet come. He was fully aware of the glory He had with the Father before the world was. But then [in His pre-existence] He willingly submitted to the Divine will, and He was unchanged now [during the temptation].” (*Ellen G. White, Bible Echo, 23rd July 1900 'Tempted in all points', see also Youth's Instructor, 3rd January 1901, 'Tempted in all points'*)

In His pre-existence Christ was an obedient Son. So too He was in His life on earth. This is how He earned the right to be the Saviour of mankind. It was through faith in His Father.

Terry Hill

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