

# **WHY THE TRINITY MATTERS**

Adventist Theological Society

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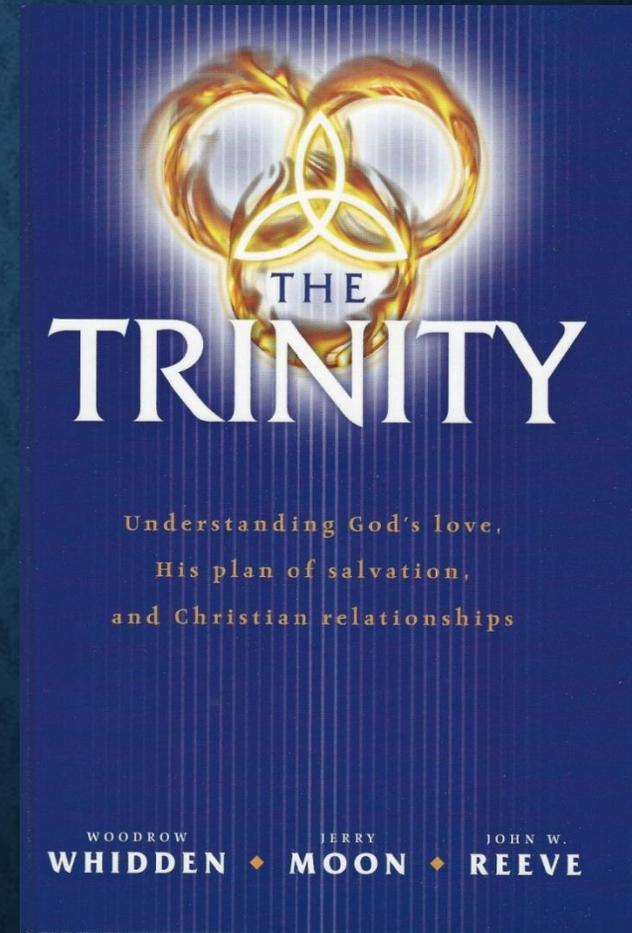
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# **ADVENTIST RESOURCES**

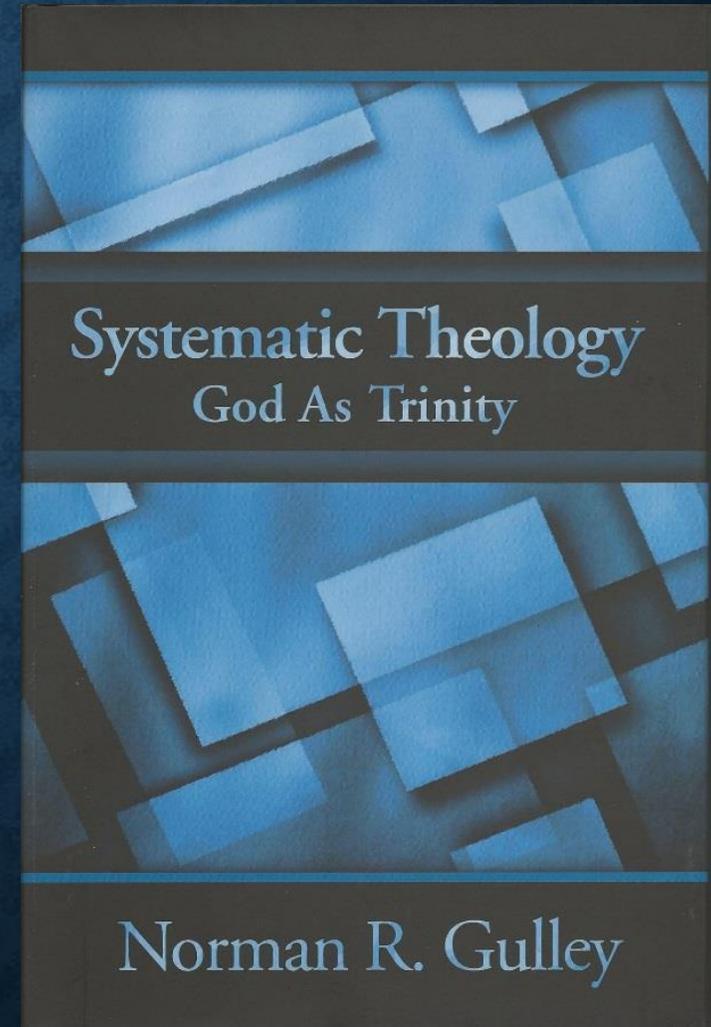
# GC BOOK ON THE TRINITY

- Available through the ABC



# NORMAN GULLEY

- Volume 2 of his System
- Especially Chapter 1
- Andrews University Press
- Likely at Collegedale ABC



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## The Trinity in Scripture

**Author:** Gerhard Pfandl

What kind of scriptural evidence do we have on the nature of God, specifically the Trinity? The author explores the biblical teaching on this topic.

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**Abortion, Darwin, and Grace**

In the Bible, rights are not conferred by human beings, nor are they merited by the individual.

**Did Christ Have a Beginning?**

Modern culture makes metaphoric use of the language of birthing, such as saying a business or an idea was born, so it should not shock us that the ancients used the metaphor similarly.

**Identity, Exclusivity, and Inclusivity**

Tolerance of others pertains to one of the many paradoxes of Christianity.

**Jephthah and the Grace of God**

The story of Jephthah teaches us about not only how faith works but also about God's grace.

**Jesus as Begotten**

Hebrews matches Paul's other writing and the psalmist in using birthing language metaphorically.

**John 8:42 and the Trinity**

John's record addresses only the earthly mission of Jesus and His coming from the Father to us in the incarnation.

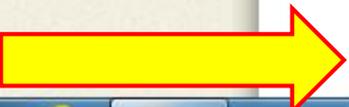
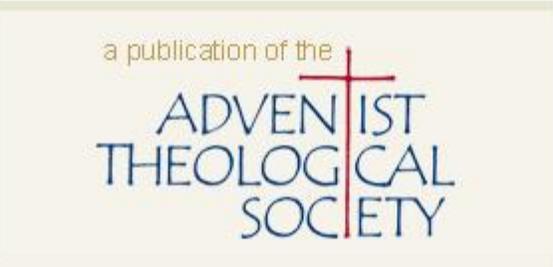
**The Ten Commandments and the Character of God**

The Ten Commandments are vital tools given by God to teach us how to reflect His character in our lives.

**Why the Trinity Matters**

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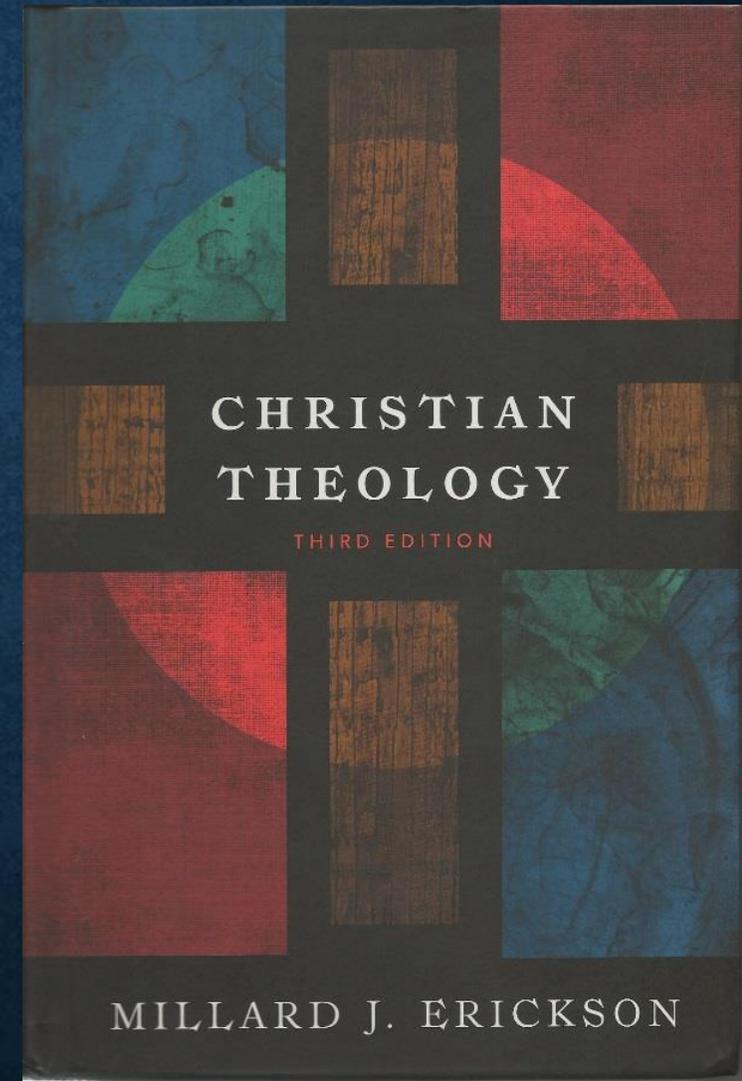
# **NON SDA RESOURCES**

# NONSDA OVERVIEWS

Millard Erickson

*Christian Theology*

Historical Survey,  
Theological Overview



# INTRODUCTION

- SDA Controversy
  - Especially since late 1990s
  - Appeal to our "pioneers" – argument from Tradition
  - Repeating patterns of early Christian history
- "The one thing we learn from history, is that we do not learn from history."
- Introduce nuance: Credal Trinity vs Biblical Trinity
  - Early SDAs use term "Trinity" solely of the Credal form – very precise usage
  - SDA Doctrine compatible with credal, but not necessarily the reverse

# TRINITY AND THE BIBLE

- The doctrine of the Trinity is not explicitly defined in the Bible
  - KJV text in 1 John 5 was altered to that form circa 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> century A.D.
- The Trinity is observed in the Bible
- The doctrinal formulation is constructed through doing biblical theology
- Other constructed doctrines:
  - Doctrine of healthful living
  - Anti-slavery
  - Anti-polygamy
  - 3-phase end-time judgment

# HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- Early church was comprised mainly of Messianic Jews
  - Judaism = Strict Monotheism – 1 God, 1 Person – Deut. 6 "*Shama*"
- How did they move from a 1-person God to a multi-person God?
- 3 Factors (next slides)

# SUMMARY

- Three key factors moving from Jewish Monotheism to Christian Trinitarianism
  1. Claims of Deity of Christ
  2. Early persecution suppressing philosophical theology
  3. Influx of Greek Philosophical Influence in the Church (especially the big leaders, i.e. Bishops)

# 4<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY - 3 KEY POINTS CHANGE

- 4<sup>th</sup> century – Arius - brings the "who is Jesus" debate (in the church) to a head:
  1. If Jesus is deity how do we have only one God?
  2. AD 312-313 – Conversion of Constantine legalizes Christianity
    - Removes pressure suppressing philosophical theology
  3. Greek Philosophy used more than the Bible as the tool to fight Arius

# NICEA (A.D. 325) TO CONSTANTINOPLE (A.D. 381)

- Council of Constantinople seals the Credal Formula in A.D. 381
  - The creed of mainline Christianity today
- Key Formula
  - The Godhead is one substance/*ousia* (*homoousia*) with three distinct persons (not just 1 person revealed in 3 modes)
- *Ousia* as the ground of reality/personhood
- Their Goal: Show Christ was same substance as the Father

# NICEA (A.D. 325) TO CONSTANTINOPLE (A.D. 381)

- Basis of concluding there is one *ousia*:
  - "Latin Fathers" humanize the Father-Son language of the Bible backwards into eternity
    - Son is begotten by the Father, hence is of the same *ousia* as like begets like
    - Problem – this would give the Son a beginning, which would undermine his deity
    - Solution: The Father has been eternally begetting the Son through all eternity
- Then the Holy Spirit is said to be eternally "proceeding" as a joint product of the Father/Son = he is the same *ousia*

# CREDAL VS BIBLICAL TRINITY

- Credal Trinity goes well beyond the Bible
  - *Ousia* and its role in determining one's being
  - Eternal begetting
  - Eternal proceeding
  - Models Divine Father-Son relation after the human Father-Son pattern
- Biblical Trinity
  - We find 3 persons depicted with same attributes; eternal, divine functions.
  - God is three persons but one God.
  - No explanatory mechanism is offered.

# SIGNIFICANCE

- Credal view: Reverse engineering from man to God may help foster idea we can logically deduce a God through philosophical insight, beyond the Bible.
  - Big problem today in Christianity/Adventism
- Credal view tends to focus on the ONENESS of the three. One *ousia*, one will, minimizing sense of personal interaction.
  - Immanent Trinity
- Bible/SDA seems to focus as much, or more, on the Threeness of God as related to functions
  - Economic Trinity
  - Sanctuary Doctrine especially emphasizes multiplicity of persons

# **BIBLICAL TRINITY**

# BACKGROUND

- Typical Biblical Tactics
  - Looking for 3 members together in same text/passage
  - Looking for 2/3 in one passage and comparing relationships/attributes/functions
  - Find 3 separately doing the same functions
  - Bauer approach: Theology of shared attributes and functions
- NT vs OT
  - Deal with anachronistic reading issue
  - OT Harder but with NT we see evidences
    - Little-to-No clear view of divine Son, but there is the Spirit

# ATTEMPTS TO BIBLICALLY SHOW THE TRINITY

- Classic: Find texts mentioning all 3
  - **Mat 28:19** – in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
  - Rev 1:4:-5 – greeting from . . . . .
  - Mat 3:16 – Baptism of Jesus, voice of God, visible Holy Spirit (dove)
    - Cf Luke 3:21-22
  - Gal 4:6 – God sends the "Spirit of His Son" into our hearts (Spirit of the Son is not the Son, hence some see all three persons here)
  - Acts 7:55 – Stephen filled with Holy Spirit gazes into heaven and sees Jesus seated with God [the Father].
  - Rom 1:2-4 - God promises Son, appoints Son, according to the Spirit

# POTENTIAL PROBLEMS WITH CITATIONS OF 3 IN SAME TEXT

- May stretch some texts beyond original intent
  - I.e. leveraging semi-incidental comments
- Possible Rebuttals:
  - Incidental comments can reveal deeper thoughts, but must be used fairly
    - NT = preponderance, not isolated
  - Larger Biblical Theology creates support for the Trinity that is more than just proof texts.

# A BIBLICAL-THEOLOGICAL APPROACH

- This method examines the Bible and how each member of the Godhead is credited with attributes and functions restricted to deity, or made analogous to another member of the Trinity in being
- Few struggle with God the Father, so in this class we will generally assume common knowledge of the classic attributes of God (especially the Father).
  - A few highlights, though are important

# HALMARKS OF DEITY

- In the Bible two things that make God, God.
  1. Being both the Creator of all, and being unmade/uncreated
    - Isa 40:18-28; 44-all. (Contrasts God as maker with idol that is made)
    - most of Isa 40-45 highlights God's uniqueness as creator.
  2. Foreknowledge – Isa 41:21-23, 26; 42:9; 44:7; 45:1-3; **46:10**
    - Note: Foreknowledge theology mixed with Creation Theology on how God is incomparable.
- If you find these 2 attributes, you have found Deity

# OTHER MARKERS OF DIVINITY

- Five more key divine functions of Deity:
  1. Being Worshipped (Isa 40-45 theology; Exo 34:14; Mat 4:10 (Luke 4:8); Rev 4:11; 14:7, 19:10/22:9 [angel refusing worship; c.f. Peter in Acts 10:25-26])
  2. Forgiving Sin (Psa 103:3; Mat 9:1-6 [cf. Mk 2:5-10; Luke 5:20-24])
  3. Being innately holy (Lev 11:44-45; Isa 6:1-3; Rev 4:8)  
"Holy One [of Israel]" a title of God (Ezek 39:7; Jer 51:5; Isa 1:4 and 10:20; Hab 1:12, etc.)

# OTHER MARKERS OF DIVINITY

## 4. Self-existence

John 5 – Father has life in Himself

Exo 4 – "I Am" – God is the God of "being"

## 5. Eternal

OT – "From everlasting to everlasting you are God"

God is first and last (Isa 41:4; 44:6; 48:12)

# **THE SON AS DEITY**

# DIVINITY OF CHRIST

- John 1:1-3 – **the Word was God**
- **Called Holy** as is God
- Luke 1:35 –<sup>35</sup> And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be **called holy—the Son of God**.
  - EGW – "These words **do not refer to any human being**, except to the Son of the infinite God." {5BC 1128.6}
- "Holy One" (Rev 3:7 – **Christ self-designates as "Holy"** (KJV); "Holy One (several modern translations); Rev 15:4 – **God almighty alone is holy**)
- **Christ forgives sins**
  - Story of Paralytic (Mat 9:1-6 [cf. Mk 2:5-10; Luke 5:20-24])

# DIVINITY OF CHRIST

- **Christ as Creator**

- John 1:3 - both creator and unmade (if Christ were created, then there is 1 thing not made through him, namely himself. Thus he must be unmade)
- Col 1:16-17
  - All things made by/through Christ (16) and he preexists all things (i.e. is unmade) (17)
  - Yet Paul also states all things were created through God (Rom 11:36)

# DIVINITY OF CHRIST

- **Christ as Creator** (continued):
  - Heb 1:2 – God creates the world "through" Christ
    - Like Col 1 – Christ is the instrumental agency used by God to create the world
  - Heb 1:3 – Christ sustains the world (a divine function)
  - Heb 1:3 – Christ is the "exact imprint of His [God's] nature." (note the Greek)

# DIVINITY OF CHRIST IN HEBREWS 1

- Heb 1:1-3 sets up the coronation speech by the Father
  - Verse 3 = timing for ensuing verses: **Hebrews 1:3 (ESV)**  
<sup>3</sup> He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,"
- Heb 1:5-12: What God the Father is saying about the Son at his post-resurrection installation as the Melchizedekan King-Priest in heaven.

# DIVINITY OF CHRIST IN HEBREWS 1

- Heb 1:6 is the FIRST thing God says about Christ
  - "And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, 'Let all God's angels **worship** him.'"
- **He is worshipped** by Angels, at God's command!
  - At this coronation, the Angels are commanded to worship Christ
    - Review:
      - Angel in Rev refuses worship from John (2x)
      - Peter refuses Cornelius's worship in Acts
      - Yet God commands the Angels to **WORSHIP** Christ
        - Is he commanding them to sin?

# DIVINITY OF CHRIST IN HEBREWS 1

- Heb 1:6 (continued)
  - Thomas bows to Christ and calls him "God" without Christ refusing (John 20:28) as the Angel did to John
  - The 24 Elders and 4 living Creatures worship Christ in Rev 5:8-9, 14
- **Christ is worshipped!** Has to be divine.

# DIVINITY OF CHRIST IN HEBREWS 1

- The SECOND thing the Father says to the Son:
- Hebrews 1:8-9 - <sup>8</sup> But of the Son he says, "Your throne, **O God**, is **forever and ever**, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. <sup>9</sup> You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions."
- Quotes Psalm Psa 45:6-7
  - Christ is **called "God"** by the Father
  - God ascribes **eternity** to the Son

# DIVINITY OF CHRIST IN HEBREWS 1

- The THIRD thing the Father says to the Son:
- **Hebrews 1:10-12 (ESV)**
  - <sup>10</sup> And, "You, **Lord**, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands;
  - <sup>11</sup> they will perish, **but you remain**; they will all wear out like a garment,
  - <sup>12</sup> like a robe you will roll them up, like a garment they will be changed. But you are the same, **and your years will have no end.**"

# DIVINITY OF CHRIST IN HEBREWS 1

- "You, **Lord**, laid the foundation of the earth . . . ."
- Quote from Psa 102:25-27 – a Psalm addressed to YHWH. The "you, Lord," in the Psalm is YHWH.
- But in Heb 1 this is what God (I.e. the Father, YHWH) is saying of the Son!
- **The Father calls the Son YHWH**
- The Son is YHWH too! We have two YHWH's here.
  - Evokes John 8 – Before Abraham was, I AM (The Jews got it!)
- Part of **NT pattern of equating Christ with YHWH.**
  - "Jesus is Lord" – LXX = *Adonai* (YHWH)

# DIVINITY OF CHRIST IN HEBREWS 1

Ellen White follows Hebrews 1:

The **incarnate I AM** is our abiding Sacrifice. **The I AM is our Redeemer, our Substitute, our Surety. He is the Daysman between God and the human soul**, our Advocate in the courts of heaven, our unwearied Intercessor, pleading in our behalf His merits and His atoning sacrifice. **The I AM is our Saviour.** In Him our hopes of eternal life are centered. He is an ever-present help in time of trouble. In Him is the assurance of every promise. We must acknowledge and receive this almighty Saviour; we must behold Him, that we may be like Him in character. "**As many as received Him**, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." {ST, May 3, 1899 par. 15}

# DIVINITY OF CHRIST IN HEBREWS 1

Ellen White follows Hebrews 1:

**Jehovah is the name given to Christ.** "Behold, God is my salvation," writes the prophet Isaiah; "I will trust, and not be afraid; for the Lord **JEHOVAH** is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. And in that day ye shall say, Praise the Lord, call upon His name, declare His doings among the people, make mention that His name is exalted." [Isa 12:2-3] "In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee. Trust ye in the Lord forever; for in the Lord **JEHOVAH** is everlasting strength." [Isa 26:1-4]{ST, May 3, 1899 par. 18}

# DIVINITY OF CHRIST IN HEBREWS 1

- Heb 1:11-12 – The Father applies a Psalm to YHWH to the Son:
  - Statement of **eternity of the Son** = attribute of Deity
    - Your years are without end, etc.
  - C.f. Revelation – both Father and Christ are the Alpha/Omega, beginning and end.
    - God – Rev 1:8; 21:6
    - Christ- Rev 22:13
    - Note also "first and the last" (c.f. Rev 1:17; 2:8 where Jesus likewise self-designates as the first and last)
      - YHWH as first and last: Isa 41:4; 44:6; 48:12
- Heb 7:3 – Christ modeled by Melchizedek, has "neither beginning of days nor end of life"
- **Self existent**: Christ has life in himself like the Father does (John 5:26)

# CONCLUSION

- The key markers of Divinity found in God (the Father) are ascribed to Christ
- **Christ is:**
  - Holy
  - Creator
  - Eternal
  - Self-existent
  - Worshipped
  - Forgives sins
  - Called YHWH by the Father

# ELLEN WHITE ON CHRIST

- DA 530 – "**In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived.**"
- 1SM 296.2 – "Man has no control over his life. But the life of Christ was **unborrowed**. No one can take this life from Him. "I lay it down of myself" (John 10:18), He said. **In Him was life, original, unborrowed, underived.** This life is not inherent in man."
- Contra any form of begetting in eternity

# CONCLUSION

- Safe to conclude that the NT presents Christ as fully God with the Father
  - Co-YHWH
- This is why:
  - John 1:1 The word was God from the beginning
  - Col 2:9 – In Christ the "**whole fullness** of deity dwells bodily"
  - Heb 1:3 – Christ is the "very stamp" of God's nature
  - Thus Phil 2:6-7 – who being in the form of God (i.e. in very nature God), was equal with God
- The evidence is overwhelmingly strong who Jesus is.
- We now see clearly, so far, 2 persons in the Godhead – Father and Son

# **THE HOLY SPIRIT**

# HOLY SPIRIT

- Focus on Personhood
- Evidences by **examining personal functions performed by the Holy Spirit**
- OT roots, not covered today
  - Each OT concept on the Spirit is mirrored and expanded in the New Testament

# THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A PERSON IN THE NT

- Eph 4:30 (parallel Isa 63) – Do not Grieve the Spirit
  - HS **has emotions** = person
- Mt 12:31-32
  - HS **can be blasphemed and sinned against** = divine person
  - Juxtaposed with blaspheming Christ, who is a divine person
  - Repeated Mark 3:28-29; Luke 12:10
  - Holy Spirit must be a divine person like Christ, in this parallelism

# THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A PERSON IN THE NT

- Romans 8:26-27
  - **HS intercedes/pleads** for us!
    - Intercession is a function performed by a personal being, not by a force
  - **HS has a mind** – "the mind of Spirit"
    - Persons have minds, forces don't

# THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A PERSON IN THE NT

Acts 13.1; 1 Cor 12:11 – Holy Spirit as **causal agent**

- HS directs, administers, makes decisions
  - 1 Cor 12 – HS **distributes Spiritual Gifts** – administrative function  
Administration is done by persons, not forces
  - Acts 13 – HS **calls and set apart** Paul and Barnabas to a work
    - **HS Speaks** = has power of language
    - HS **uses pronoun "me"** (dative of *ego* – a self-designation by a **personal being**) – a self-testimony to His personhood

# THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A PERSON IN THE NT

- Mt 28:19 – HS **shares name** with Father and Son
  - Noted earlier Heb 1:10 where Father and Son share the name YHWH
  - Heb 3:7 – Holy Spirit speaks = quote from Psa 95:8-9, which is YHWH speaking.
    - = Third YHWH in Hebrews
- Some cite: Rev 1 Greetings from 1. The one who is, was . . . , 2. Seven Spirits, 3. Jesus Christ.
  - Joint greetings from 3 persons.

# THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A PERSON IN THE NT

- John 16:8
  - Holy Spirit convicts of sin, righteousness, and judgment
  - Parallel to the Striving in Gen 6
- John 14:26/16:13 – Holy Spirit **teaches** and guides
  - Functions of a person, not a force

# THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A PERSON IN THE NT

- **John 14:16 (RSV)**

<sup>16</sup> And I will pray the Father, and he will give you **another Counselor**, to be with you for ever,

- "Another" – 2 possible Greek Words

- ἕτερος (*heteros*) – another of a differing kind

- Example: Gal 1:6 "another" (*heteros*) Gospel differing from the true one

- ἄλλος (*allos*) – another of the same kind

- Example: Mat 21:33 – "Hear another (*allos*) parable . . ."

# THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A PERSON IN THE NT

- Note: NT has a few cases with interchangeability but generally *allos* and *heteros* stay different in meaning
  - John 14 has nothing to indicate a case of interchangeability between *allos* and *heteros*
  - So which one does Jesus use?
    - = *allos* – another of the same kind;
- Before clinching, let us examine "Comforter/Counselor"

# THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A PERSON IN THE NT

- John 14:16 – Comforter/Counselor
  - Greek word is παράκλητος (*parakletos*) – a helper, intercessor, advocate
  - John 14 and 16 use *parakletos* for the Holy Spirit
    - (it's not the same word as intercession in Rom 8)
  - 1 John 2:1 – Jesus is our *parakletos*.
  - **Both Jesus and the HS are called *parakletos***
- *Parakletos* indicates a role held by a person. Impersonal forces are not advocates or intercessors.

# THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A PERSON IN THE NT

- With both as *parakletos*, and the HS being an *allos parakletos*, this means the HS is of the same KIND as Christ.
- Is Jesus a divine person? For the HS to be *allos*, another LIKE Christ, he must be a divine and a person!
- IF Like Christ = Must be like Christ as also being YHWH

# CHALLENGING TEXTS

# ANTI-TRINITARIAN "BIBLICAL" POINTS

- 3 major tracks:
  1. "Only begotten" - *monogenēs* – as evidence Christ was begotten as Son, back in eternity
  2. Begotten – "*gennaō*" – to beget, to birth, etc.
    - Primarily Psa 2 and Prov 8 used
  3. Handful of other texts

***MONOGENĒS***

# WHY THE FUSS OVER *MONOGENĒS*?

- Anti-Trinitarians seem heavily influenced by KJV translation, "only begotten"
- Assertion : *monogenēs* is a compound from *mono* and *gennaō* but this is not defensible.
- The actual roots are *mono* (sole, only, alone) and *ginomai* (to become)
  - = one of a kind; unique
- Anti Trinitarians interpret as if "begotten" is the core focus/meaning of *monogenēs*
- Conclude: based on John 3:16,18 - you must believe in the begottenness of the son to be saved.
  - Denial of "begottenness" of Christ (back in eternity) = denying the Son

# ***MONOGENĒS* AND JEROME'S LATIN TRANSLATION (VULGATE)**

- Old Latin – translated all NT uses of *monogenēs* with *unicus* (root of English, "unique")
  - *Unicus* = alone, sole, unique
- Jerome modifies *monogenēs* translation but only in reference to Christ,
  - All others he leaves as *unicus*
  - Of Christ, he uses the Latin equivalent of *monogennaō*
    - *Mono* – only, alone
    - *Gennaō* – to give birth, to beget, to be born
  - *Monogennaō* = only begotten

# ***MONOGENĒS* AND JEROME'S LATIN TRANSLATION (VULGATE)**

- Published in **A.D. 382**, the calendar year after the final credal form is settled.
- Basis of the *Textus Receptus*, which is the basis of the King James translation, "only begotten"
- No linguistic basis to tie *Monogenēs* to *Gennaō*
  - It appears to be a **theological edit by Jerome to match the new creed (A.D. 381)**, without etymological foundation

# ***MONOGENĒS* IN THE BIBLE**

# ***MONOGENĒS* IN THE LXX**

- Examples of use in LXX which formed NT use:
  - Always translates Hebrew, *yahid* (only, alone, solitary)
    - Connotes uniqueness
    - *Yahid* is never connoting idea one was birthed or begotten
    - = Unique, alone
  - Note: but not all uses of *yahid* become *monogenēs* in the LXX
- 4 occurrences of *monogenēs* in LXX (Septuagint)

# ***MONOGENĒS* IN THE LXX**

## **(1) Judges 11:34 (ESV)**

<sup>34</sup> Then Jephthah came to his home at Mizpah. And behold, his daughter came out to meet him with tambourines and with dances. She was his **only** child; beside her **he had neither son nor daughter.**

- **Focus is on the solitary, unique nature, not that she was sired by Jephthah**

**(2-3) Psa 22:20 (LXX: Psa 21:21) and 35:17 (LXX: Psa 34:17) = one's personal self/life needing saving from the dogs or lions**

**(4) Psa 25:16 (LXX Psa 24:16) = adjective, "I am *desolate* and afflicted." *Lonely* or *alone* would be a good alternate.**

# ***MONOGENĒS* IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

- Luke has 3 uses, all of only children
  - Examples: Son of Widow of Nain; Jairus' daughter
  - All 3 uses in Luke are of only children
- Hebrews 11:17 - of Isaac
  - Key text as Isaac is NOT only son of Abraham
  - (Arguing only son of Sarah does not work – Sarah is not mentioned in Heb 11:17)
  - Here = unique, one of a kind

# ANTI-TRINITARIAN EXPLANATION

- Anti-Trinitarians put emphasis on "only CHILD" instead of "ONLY child"
  - Feel focus is this on begetting, not uniqueness
- My response:
  - We get the concept of "begetting" from the term, Child.
  - *Monogenēs*, translating *yahid*, is not innately oriented to begetting, especially separate from being tied to "child"
    - Note the LXX uses for "my precious life" - Psalmist did not beget himself

# *MONOGENĒS* IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

- John uses 5 times, all of Christ
  - 2 in John 1 (.14, 18)
  - 2 in John 3 (.16, 18)
  - 1 in 1 John 4:9
- All Johannine uses are in reference to the **incarnate** Christ, not of preincarnate Christ
- Why is Christ one of a kind?
  - Only God-man

# ***MONOGENĒS* IN THE BIBLE**

- Conclusion:
  - In the Bible *monogenēs* focuses on uniqueness, not origins
    - Only-ness of a child (daughters of Jephthah, Jairus; widow's son at Nain)
    - Uniqueness of a child (Isaac)
  - We have good reason to think Christological texts are focusing on concept of "Unique" – one and only; one of a kind
- Because of the wrongful linking *monogenēs* to begetting, we need to look at the verb for begetting, *Gennaō*

***GENNAO***

# GENNAŌ

- Because of erroneous ties from old Latin of *Monogenēs* to *Gennaō*
  1. Some of the church Fathers leverage *Gennaō* to a temporal or eternal begetting of the Son (re same *ousia* or re subordination)
  2. SDA anti-Trinitarians use the term for a singular act of begetting, back in eternity.
- *Gennaō*
  - Masculine form = to sire a child, to beget
  - Feminine form = give birth
  - Passive form = to be born, birthed

# **GENNAŌ**

- NT - Only used of Christ two ways:
  1. Incarnation:
    - Luke 1:35 Born of Mary through the Holy Spirit (verb is used of Mary not of Holy Spirit)
    - John 18:37 – Jesus says he was born to witness to the truth
    - John 8:41 – Jesus accused of being born of fornication
    - Gal 4:4 – God's son born of a woman
  2. Quoting Psalm 2 (3 times in NT)

# PSALM 2:7

## Psalm 2:6-7 (ESV)

<sup>6</sup> "As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill."

<sup>7</sup> I will tell of the decree: The Lord said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you."

- Anti-Trinitarians assert this is a clear biblical reference to God begetting the Son back in eternity
  - Coronation element is underemphasized or ignored
- Is this a literal begetting in eternity?

# PSALM 2:7

- This is a Coronation Psalm
  - King is installed into office, by a superior king, using language of siring a child
  - Siring/birthing = metaphor for installation into new role, new way of life, reflecting the superior king's adoption of new king as a son upon being installed (birthed) into office.
  - Psa 2:7 has nothing to do with physically "begetting" someone
  - The king being "begotten" into office preexists his "begetting"

# PSALM 2:7 IN THE NT

- **Acts 13:33 (ESV)**

<sup>32</sup> And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers,

<sup>33</sup> this he has fulfilled to us their children by **raising Jesus**, as also it is written in the second Psalm, " 'You are my Son, today I have **begotten you.**' "

- Here Paul quotes Psalm 2:7, and applies to risen Christ, not to back in eternity
- Thus = metaphoric, coronation-installation as per Psa 2:7, and not a statement of origins (especially being applied to post-resurrection time-frame)

# PSALM 2:7 IN THE NT

- **Hebrews 1:5 (ESV)**  
<sup>5</sup> For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you"? Or again, "I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son"?
- Hebrews 1:3 gives the timing:  
<sup>3</sup> ... **After making purification for sins**, he **sat down** at the right hand of the Majesty on high,
- The begetting is post-resurrection, not back in eternity

# PSALM 2:7 IN THE NT

- Cf. **Hebrews 5:5 (ESV)**
  - <sup>5</sup> So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was **appointed** by him who said to him, "You are my Son, today I have **begotten** you";
    - = post resurrection installation as priest-king to serve in heavenly sanctuary, exactly as per Psa 2:7
      - Heb 5 even says "**appointed**"
    - Again = appointment, installation, **post resurrection**, so cannot be statement of eternal origins
    - Rom 1:4 – **appointed/designated Son at resurrection**

## PSALM 2:7 IN THE NT

- Acts 13 and Hebrews 1 & 5 are the only NT texts using *gennaō* (γενναω) of Christ outside of his birth by Mary
- All are quoting Psa 2:7 showing they intend us to see an installation ceremony, not a statement of origins
- All apply to the POST-resurrection Christ, which undermines the origins interpretation
- None apply it to a pre-incarnation begetting back in eternity
- See my article in *Perspective Digest*  
(<http://www.perspectivedigest.org/article/43/archives/16-3/jesus-as-begotten>)

# ANGEL TO MARY ON THE SONSHIP OF CHRIST

- **Luke 1:35 (ESV)**

<sup>35</sup> And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; **therefore** the child to be born will be **called** holy—the **Son** of God.

- "therefore" = διὸ = therefore, for this reason
- The incarnation is why Christ is called Son

# OTHER TEXTS USED FOR JESUS AS BEGOTTEN

- Prov 8:22, ff
  - .22 – try to use the translation "created" even though they say Christ was begotten, not made
    - *qana* – to acquire, possess. This is only verse some scholars try to translate with "create".
    - Try to connect to Eve conceiving Cain, and saying she "acquired a man child" as a case of *qana* as birthing, but *qana* is to acquire, not to birth. She thinks she has acquired the promised seed.
  - .24-5 do use the language of birthing (*Yalad*; LXX *gennaō* – "brought forth") but this is in parallelism to verse the installation language ("set up) in vs 23 (next slide)

# OTHER TEXTS USED FOR JESUS AS BEGOTTEN

- Prov 8:22, ff (cont.)
  - .23 – Wisdom was "installed" ("set up")
    - Niphal of *nasak*
    - Same verb as Psalm 2:6 where God installs his king on the throne
  - Like Psalm 2, the language of installation is used in parallelism with the language of birthing (being begotten)
  - Birthing/being begotten is clearly used metaphorically of the installation process, not a birthing of a deity.

# OTHER TEXTS USED FOR JESUS AS BEGOTTEN

- Prov 8 = Christ taking his salvific roles and titles in reference to His mediatorial/creative roles to this world
  - Takes honorific of "son" in anticipation of the incarnation and begins that role going into the creation, for purposes related to us, not to deity.
  - Wisdom preexists her "begetting" in Prov 8, because it is installation into the office creative agent/mediator to this world.

**SO WHAT?**

# WHY IT MATTERS

- Theological Purpose of Trinity
  - God not knowable through philosophy
  - He must self-reveal
  - God defines himself
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Command:
  - God-in-a-box
  - Right to mystery
  - God's right to self-define
- Idolatry alive and well today

# WHY IT MATTERS

- We Know God through His Roles, how He relates to us
  - We do not Know His full Being
- Bedroom Analogy
  - Need know our limits

# REDEMPTIVE ROLES, FOR US NOT ONTOLOGY

EGW: "Had God the Father come to our world and dwelt among us, veiling His glory and humbling Himself, that humanity might look upon Him, the history that we have of the life of Christ would not have been changed in unfolding its record of His own condescending grace. In every act of Jesus, in every lesson of His instruction, we are to see and hear and recognize God. In sight, in hearing, in effect, it is the voice and movements of the Father. But language seems to be so feeble! I refrain, and with John exclaim, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not" [1 John 3:1].--Letter 83, 1895.

# WHY IT MATTERS

Diminishes the Gospel

Phil 2:5-8

John 12 – hireling?

Immanuel – GOD with us

YHWH

# WHY IT MATTERS

Impersonal Holy Spirit:

Contra many biblical texts

Contra EGW

Favors eventual pantheism

Impact on missiology

# WHY IT MATTERS?

- Distracts the church from its mission
  - Arguing over our church fathers, Tradition
- God in my Box or as revealed

**THE END**