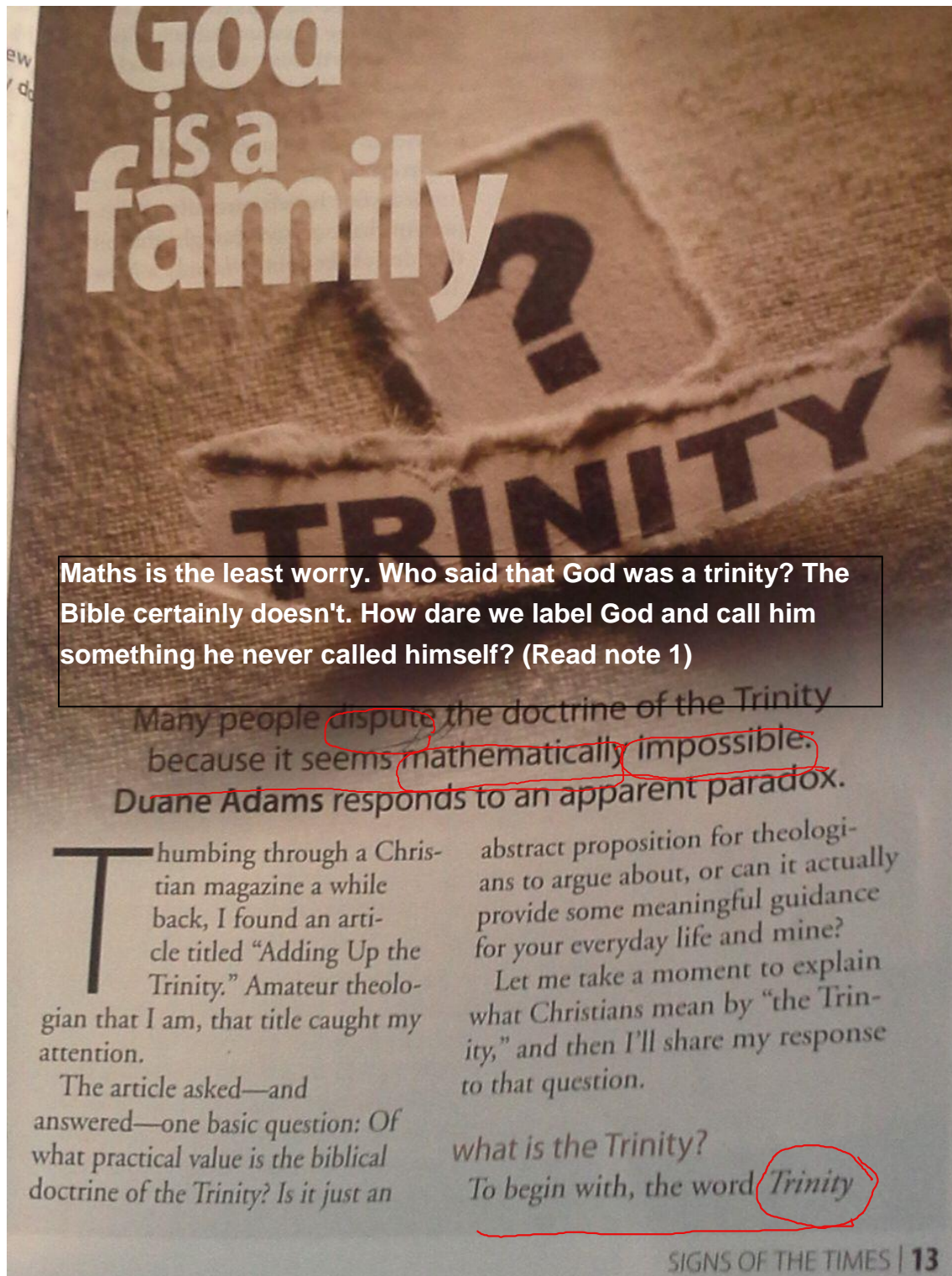


The Trinity Article Signs of the Times July 2012



Maths is the least worry. Who said that God was a trinity? The Bible certainly doesn't. How dare we label God and call him something he never called himself? (Read note 1)

Many people dispute the doctrine of the Trinity because it seems mathematically impossible. Duane Adams responds to an apparent paradox.

Thumbing through a Christian magazine a while back, I found an article titled "Adding Up the Trinity." Amateur theologian that I am, that title caught my attention.

The article asked—and answered—one basic question: Of what practical value is the biblical doctrine of the Trinity? Is it just an

abstract proposition for theologians to argue about, or can it actually provide some meaningful guidance for your everyday life and mine?

Let me take a moment to explain what Christians mean by "the Trinity," and then I'll share my response to that question.

what is the Trinity?

To begin with, the word *Trinity*

Note 1: Further on in the article the origin of the word 'trinity' is briefly explained. "The idea of the trinity shows up very clearly in the Bible but because the Bible does not give this idea a name theologians have chosen to call it the "trinity"¹. The majority of Christianity refers to God as the trinity. Let's put the term God into what was written in the above paragraph: "The idea of the 'God' shows up very clearly in the Bible but because the Bible does not give this idea a name theologians have chosen to call it the "God". Basically the trinitarian who wrote this article is expressing that God's description of himself is clear in the Bible but because we don't understand it we are going to create new terminology and ideas that will help make it easier to understand God. In doing so man's wisdom is made superior to God's wisdom. This idea called the "trinity" has now become their God.

does not appear in the Bible. The idea of the Trinity shows up very clearly in the Bible, but because the Bible does not give this idea a name, theologians have chosen to call it "the Trinity."

The simplest way to state what the Trinity means is to say that the "Godhead" is made up of Three Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. However, this poses a problem, because Christians, like Jews and Muslims, claim to be monotheists—that is, we claim to believe in one God. But if God is Three Persons, how can we say that we believe in one God?

At first glance that sounds like a mathematical impossibility. However, an example from nature may help to clear up the problem. We all

know that a clover leaf is one leaf, not three. The leaf has three segments—three separate leaflets, if you please. Nevertheless, we call it a clover leaf, not clover leaves.

God is something like that: three individual parts, but one God.

If you're a Christian and you've studied your beliefs carefully, you perhaps have always thought that the idea of the Trinity is only a New Testament idea. However, it's clearly suggested in the Old Testament, beginning with the first chapter of the Bible. Speaking of the creation of Adam and Eve, God said, "Let us make man in our image" (Genesis 1:26). Notice the pronoun *us*. That's plural, and it's plural in the original Hebrew language as well.

The same pronoun is used in the

biblical evidence of the Trinity

What biblical evidence is there that the Son (Jesus) and the Holy Spirit are Divine Persons like the Father?

Obviously, Jesus is a separate individual from the Father, and the Bible makes it clear that He is also fully God. John 1:1 says, "In the beginning was the Word [Jesus], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (emphasis added). In several places, the New Testament tells us that Jesus was the Creator of the universe. (See, for example, John 1:3; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2.)

Also, several times Jesus spoke of Himself in terms that belong only to deity, which according to Jewish law would have been blasphemy had it not been true. For example, on one occasion, He said, "Before Abraham was born, I am!" (John 8:58, emphasis added). *I am* is a Hebrew term that means "God" (Exodus 3:14). It's evident that the Jews understood Jesus' use of this term to be a claim to His divinity because they picked up stones to

The Bible teaches that there is only ONE God so in order to explain this apparent contradiction between the 'trinity' - three person focus and the ONE God of the Bible the author turns to "an example from nature"² which 'may help to clear up the problem'. The clover leaf is used to help illustrate how God is

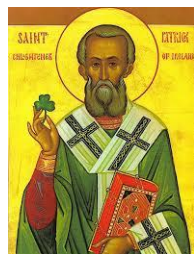
'one' but has three segments or persons. **ONE BIG PROBLEM** arises from this comparison. The author, by suggesting that God is like one of his creative works (the clover leaf) has just broken the second commandment. Exodus 20:4 "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: 5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God."³

To further explain the application of this commandment we need to refer to Acts 17:29 "Forasmuch then

as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device".⁴ By focusing on God's creative works to explain his very own attributes Romans 1:22 spells it out very simply: "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, Verse 23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things."⁵ The "glory of the uncorruptible God" and the "Godhead" has been reduced to the three segments of a corruptible clover leaf. The likeness of the clover leaf found on the "earth beneath" has become the image all readers are encouraged to visualize when contemplating who God is and what He is like. In their "wisdom" they have become "fools". Pro 24:9 "The thought of foolishness is sin."⁶ Trinitarians have many other 'images' they use to explain what God is like ranging from God being like an egg, H2O - water in its three forms - water, ice and steam, and the list goes on.

NEWS FLASH: Watching the video the Seventh Day Adventist church currently uses to explain their belief in the trinity is a big concern when you consider the holiness and majesty of our incorruptible God. See the video at the top of this web page: <http://www.adventist.org/beliefs/god/trinity/>⁷

God has revealed Himself in the word. : John 17: 3 "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."⁸ We need to let the word speak to our hearts and minds and convict us of who God is. Don't let man's foolishness corrupt your understanding and lead you to worship a false God of his own creation. After all the pagan origins of the clover leaf symbol are well



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recognised:

"The Druids of the British Isles regarded clover as sacred with good and evil meanings. According to legend, however, St Patrick later converted the Pagan Irish to Christianity by using the three-part clover leaf as example of the trinity: God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in one."

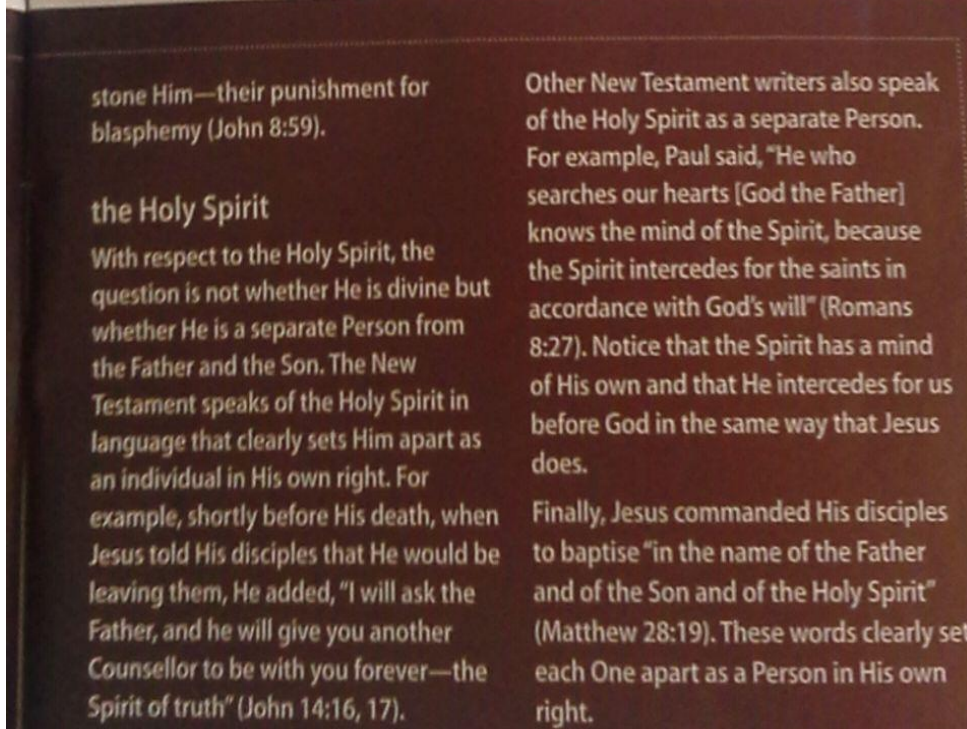
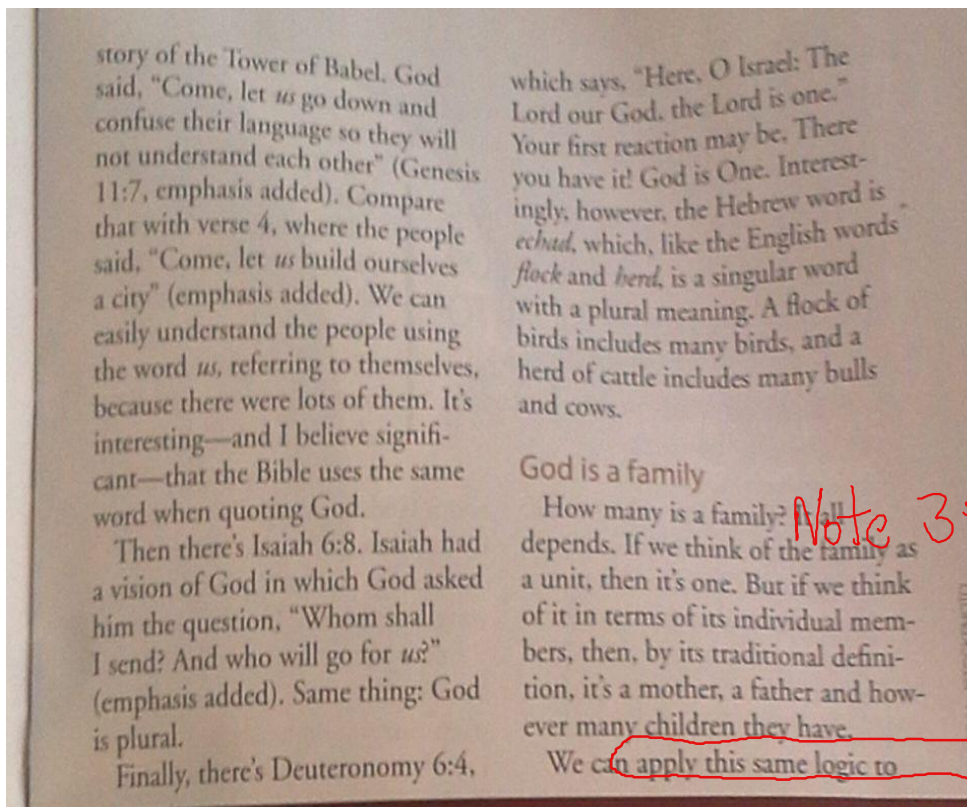
<http://www.mythencyclopedia.com/Pa-Pr/Plants-in-Mythology.html>¹¹

Note 2: The plurality of God is then emphasized in the Signs of the Times article by stating that the "idea of the trinity" is "clearly suggested in the old testament."¹² Right at the beginning of the world God states "Let us make man in our image"¹³ Genesis 1:26. The idea of three persons being involved does not come from the word itself, it is a number imposed by trinitarians. The word 'us' could include any number of persons in addition to the speaker. The prophet Ellen White clarifies our understanding of this text: "After the earth was created, and the beasts upon it, **the Father and Son carried out their purpose,** which was designed before the fall of Satan, to make man in their own image. They had wrought together in the creation of the earth and every living thing upon it. **And now God says to his Son,** "Let us make man in our image." As Adam came forth from the hand of his Creator, he was of noble height, and of beautiful symmetry."¹⁴ **1SP 24.2** Clearly Genesis 1:26 is a conversation between the heavenly father and his son. This verse cannot be used as evidence of a trinity.

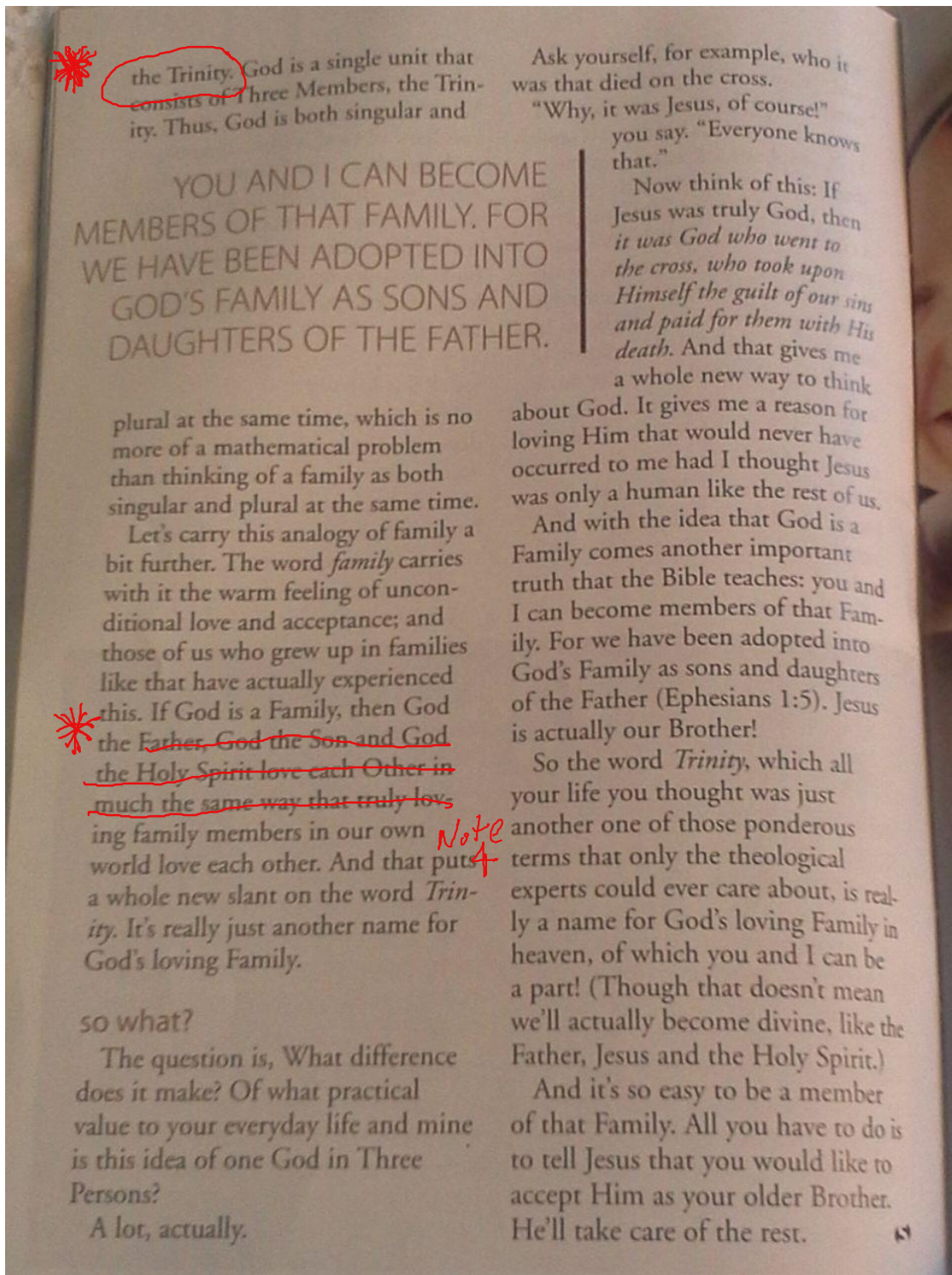
In further examples from the confusion of languages at Babel and the vision Isaiah had of God asking "Who will go for us?" the term 'us' is used in a similar fashion. The heavenly father is communicating with his son. Communication between the Father and son and not a trinity is what is taking place just as

in Zechariah 6:13 where Christ is a priest upon his throne and "the counsel of peace is between them **BOTH**".

Note 3: The analogy of a family is now used in the article to help the reader understand what God is like. This process is similar to the clover analogy. We cannot understand God as a trinity so "we can apply this same logic to the trinity"¹⁵ in an attempt to understand it. A human family is composed of a husband and wife and the children they bear. The trinity certainly doesn't mirror an earthly family. Basically this analogy is used to address the multiple persons that exist in the trinity, however it stops there. Comparing the holy God to a family falls short. No wife exists in the trinity. Is the spirit of God meant to be one of the children? Other words implying the existence of more than one person could have been used. What about a 'team', a group, 'crew' or a 'band'? Using human logic to explain who God is has failed miserably.



Note 4: The 'loving family' of the trinity in the article has members described as "God the father, god the son and god the holy spirit"¹⁶. The titles 'god the son' and 'god the holy spirit' were first used in the Athanasian Creed developed in the late 5th and 6th century. The Son of God and the Holy Spirit of God are the titles given to them in scripture. Man's idea of who God is has been placed above God's inspired word.



"The term "god the son" is not found in the Bible, but is a term found in a later Christian source. By scribal error the term is in one medieval manuscript, MS No.1985, where Galatians 2:2 has "Son of God" changed to "god the son". The term in English follows Greek and Latin usage as found in the Athanasian Creed and other texts of the early church.

F. Donald Logan *A history of the church in the Middle Ages* Page 10 2002 "It was later to be summed up in the Athanasian Creed: Ita deus pater, deus filius, deus spiritus sanctus, Et tamen non tres dii, sed unus est deus. (Thus, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, Yet not three gods but one God." ¹⁷

Can you see what has happened? The author of this article and the authorities who approved the inclusion of it in the SDA magazine - The Signs of the Times, are confirming that they believe in the 'trinity' god as defined by the wisdom of man rather than the God revealed in the Holy Scriptures. Why is this such a big issue? Belief in the 'SON OF GOD' is a salvation issue. John 3:16 says it all: 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. The son-ship of Christ is a truth on which our salvation is dependent on. Christ is truly the SON OF GOD. 1 John 5:1 states: Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. Christ was begotten of God his Father. Before his birth on earth to the humble virgin Mary he was begotten of the Father in heaven. Our heavenly father 'begat' his son. Hebrews 1:5, 6 affirms the divine origin of the Son of God:

"For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him."

Christ was raised by the Father after His death on the cross and the Father expresses "Thou art my son, this day I have begotten thee". Notice he also states that AGAIN I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a son". Christ before leaving the heavenly realms was the Son of God and the Father welcomes his Son home. Christ is also described as the first begotten brought into the world, this refers to his entrance into the world as a helpless babe. The only or first begotten Son of heaven was the object of angelic worship as they told the shepherds of his birth and sang: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. (Luke 2:14). He was the first begotten before his birth in Bethlehem.

Hebrews 1:4 - Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee? And again, I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son?" Hebrews 1:1-5
8T 268.2

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. **8T 268.3**¹⁸

If we love the Father who begat Christ according to 1 John 5:1 we will also love "him that is begotten of him" - the Son of God... The term begat in this context according to the Strong's Definition is: From a variation of G1085; to procreate (properly of the father, but by extension of the mother); figuratively to regenerate: - bear, beget, be born, bring forth, conceive, be delivered of, gender, make, spring.¹⁹ Christ 'came forth' from the Father: John 16:28: I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: a gain, I leave the world, and go to the Father. Before coming to this world Christ 'came forth'.

Considering the son-ship of Christ why is the reference to 'GOD THE SON' instead of the 'SON OF GOD' such a big issue?

You need to understand why trinitarians prefer the reference GOD THE SON. According to trinitarians The expression GOD THE SON emphasizes his divinity, his equality with the father and that he truly is 'God' and has been God from eternity. There was never a time when he was not God. According to Trinitarians the expression the SON OF GOD in contrast emphasizes the 'son' status of Christ, it implies that he is not equal with the Father and it also gives people the impression he was an actual literal son. This would mean that in eternity there was a time when Christ was not the son because he had not been born. This would bring the son's equality with God and divinity into question.

Christianity developed the concept of eternal generation to ensure that god the son was 'eternal' - he was always with the father and was brought forth continually. Making sure that god the son never had a beginning would mean he was divine and equally God. Here is a definition of the eternal generation concept:

The **eternal generation of the Son** is defined as "an eternal personal act of the [Father](#), wherein, by necessity of nature, not by choice of will, He generates the person (not the essence) of the Son, by communicating to Him the whole indivisible substance of the Godhead, without division, alienation, or change, so that the Son is the express image of His Father's person, and eternally continues, not from the Father, but in the Father, and the Father in the Son."²⁰

Does God's word teach that the Son of God was eternally generated? Proverbs 8 states:

22 The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old.

23 **I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.**

24 When there were no depths, **I was brought forth**; when there were no fountains abounding with water.

30 Then **I was by him, as one brought up with him**: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him

Proverbs 30:4 states: Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? Who hath gathered the wind in his fists? Who hath bound the waters in a garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? **What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?**

The wisest man on earth - Solomon, imbued with the Spirit of God testifies that God had a son that was brought forth in eternity before the earth was established. He was "by him, as one brought up" with him. The phrase 'brought up' actually implies a form of 'training' or the acquisition of skills according to the Strong's Concordance. The Father taught his son and beside Him the Son whose goings forth were from everlasting (Micah 5:2) was given the glory of the Father (John 17:24). He was fully divine because he was truly the begotten, literal SON OF GOD. The attributes of the FATHER were inherited by the SON (Hebrews 1:4) and he also inherited a more excellent name than the angels which was 'in him' (Exodus 23:21). The Son of God was with God and he was God (John 1:1). His equality with the Father and his divinity are beyond question. His literal sonship assures us that he is just as divine as his Father.

An assumption has been made by Christendom that if Christ is a literal Son of God from eternity that he could not be divine. This assumption is not scriptural. See the quotes below to try and understand their human reasoning:

The Father brings forth the Son by the act of being God, not by an act of will, so that the Son fully shares in the Father's deity and glory as God.

There has never been, nor is it possible for there to be, any God and Father without the Son.²¹

http://www.theopedia.com/Eternal_generation_of_the_Son

Clearly, then, the manner in which a human father begets a son differs significantly from the manner in which the Father begets the Son. For one thing, **in human begetting, there is a time when the son does not exist; but in the divine original of which the human begetting is but a pale reflection, there never was a time wh**

en the Son did not exist (*pace* Arius). Furthermore, human begetting involves a mother and a father, whereas the Son is begotten of the Father alone. And a human father's begetting is a free and voluntary act, while **the Son's filiation is an eternal and necessary act. Otherwise, the Son would be a contingent being, but no contingent being is divine.**²²

<http://www.upper-register.com/papers/monogenes.html>

Trinitarians do not believe in the literal Son of God. The above quotes try to explain why and state that **'there never was a time that the Son did not exist'**. This belief arises from a theory espoused by Thomas Aquinas a member of the Dominican order of Catholic priests in the 1200's.

"A contingent being is an object that cannot exist without a necessary being causing its existence. Aquinas believed that the existence of contingent beings would ultimately necessitate a being which must exist for all of the contingent beings to exist. This being, called a necessary being, is what we call God." ²³ http://www.scandalon.co.uk/philosophy/cosmological_aquinas.htm

Aquinas theorized that "Contingent beings, therefore, are insufficient to account for the existence of contingent beings: there must exist a necessary being whose non-existence is an impossibility, and from which the existence of all contingent beings is derived".²⁴

http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cosmological_argument

This reasoning is very difficult to comprehend but all Aquinas was trying to do was understand how the Cosmos came into being and how the Son of God could be God and divine, if he, himself was brought Into existence by the Father.

If Christ was the literal son of God in heaven he would be dependent on the Father for his existence and would have had a beginning. Christ was brought forth in eternity. If we believe he is a literal son and believe in the contingency theory of Aquinas we have to conclude he is not divine. He would be a contingent being - reliant on another for his existence. Trinitarians do not believe that the Son of God was a literal son because they assume he would not be divine. Instead they believe that he was with God from eternity or 'co-eternal'. Most trinitarians unknowingly subscribe to the contingency theory of Aquinas – by believing in the trinity god.

The SDA church describes their fundamental belief in God as:

There is one God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons. God is immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, above all, and ever present. He is infinite and beyond human comprehension, yet known through His self-revelation. He is forever worthy of worship, adoration and service by all of creation. ([Deut. 6:4](#); [Matt. 28:19](#); [2 Cor. 13:14](#); [Eph. 4:4-6](#); [1 Peter 1:2](#); [1 Tim. 1:17](#); [Rev. 14:7](#).)²⁵

<http://ssnet.org/about-us/fundamental-beliefs-seventh-day-adventists/trinity-fundamental-belief/>

In its official statement of beliefs, the Seventh-day Adventist Church expresses its belief in the Trinity this way in paragraph 2, "There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three **co-eternal** Persons." Most of the **expressions in the statement in general**

are biblical. But the word "co-eternal" is not. The reason it is used, however, is very simple. It makes it clear that **Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all eternal**, and that they are not one and the same person. They are distinct personalities."²⁶ <http://www.adventist.org.au/fs-theological-questions>

The SDA church: "upholds the belief that the three are distinct persons, all God, and consequently, all eternal. "The Holy Spirit is called eternal in Hebrews 9:14, Jesus in the prophecy by Isaiah in 9:6. And **a divine person in the Bible is a person without a beginning.** If Jesus as Yahweh has beginning, it means that God has a beginning. Such notion is pagan and clearly contrary to the biblical record. **Pagan gods were believed to have a beginning.** They came into being. Yahweh, the God of the Bible did not."²⁷

In the above statement where does scripture reference fade and tradition take hold? Scripture is mentioned and then the statement: **"And a divine person in the Bible is a person without a beginning".**

Where does this idea that a divine person does not have a beginning come from? Does it come from the Bible?

According to man's philosophy referred to previously in this article Aquinas proposed that:

"A contingent being is an object that cannot exist without a necessary being causing its existence. Aquinas believed that the existence of contingent beings would ultimately necessitate a being which must exist for all of the contingent beings to exist. This being, called a necessary being, is what we call God."²⁸ http://www.scandalon.co.uk/philosophy/cosmological_aquinas.htm

It is this 'contingent' being philosophy that has contributed to the evolution of the trinity doctrine. Christ is god the son. He was begotten of the Father but **"There has never been, nor is it possible for there to be, any God and Father without the Son."**²⁹ The Father: "generates the person (not the essence) of the Son, by communicating to Him the whole indivisible substance of the Godhead, without division, alienation, or change, so that the Son is the express image of His Father's person, and **eternally continues, not from the Father, but in the Father, and the Father in the Son.**"³⁰ This is where the concept of 'co-eternal' arises. For Jesus Christ to be divine and equal with God the Father he must not come into existence after the Father but eternally co-exist with the Father. This principle of 'co-eternal' existence has arisen from the cesspools of human philosophy. It has led to the 'Son of God' being entitled 'god the son'. It has denigrated the 'sonship' of Christ. So much so that the SDA church now believes:

"the expression "eternally begotten/born" or "born before all ages" of little help in presenting the gospel. The wording, not least the phrase "born before all ages" played a role in the discussion among the Adventist pioneers from the latter part of the 19th century where they attempted to understand the relationship between Jesus and the Father and pondered up on such traditional phrases. Since then close Bible studies have persuaded Adventist scholars that **the term "Son" means "representative" and does not indicate that Jesus had any beginning.**"³¹

<http://www.adventist.org.au/fs-theological-questions>

The SDA church has decided after 'close bible study' that the 'Son of God' is not the literal 'Son of God'

begotten in eternity. The term 'Son' does not mean what the Bible clearly states, instead Jesus Christ is the 'representative' of the Father. Jesus did not have a beginning, He has been co-eternal with the Father from all eternity.

The Trinity is the modern BAAL of Christianity and Seventh Day Adventists. Jesus Christ is no longer the SON OF GOD. He is GOD THE SON. For Adventists it is even worse. They give lip-service to GOD THE SON but actually believe in 'GOD THE REPRESENTATIVE'.

1 John 2 expounds a fundamental test of doctrine:

22 Who is a liar but he that denied that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

23 Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.

The son-ship of Christ in eternity is a precious truth that is being obliterated by the 'father of lies' - Satan. When we follow false gods we are really worshipping the ultimate antichrist - Satan. 1 Kings 18:21 And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

How will you answer Elijah's question?

¹ God is a Family, Signs of the Times, July 2012, pg. 13

² God is a Family, Signs of the Times, July 2012, pg. 14

³ The Bible, King James Version, Exodus 20:4

⁴ The Bible, King James Version, Acts 17:29

⁵ The Bible, King James Version, Romans 1: 22,23

⁶ The Bible, King James Version, Proverbs 24:9

⁷ <http://www.adventist.org/beliefs/god/trinity/>

⁸ The Bible, King James Version, John 17:3

⁹ www.the1thing.com

¹⁰ www.stthomasquinaschurch.org

¹¹ <http://www.mythencyclopedia.com/Pa-Pr/Plants-in-Mythology.html>

¹² God is a Family, Signs of the Times, July 2012, pg. 14

¹³ The Bible, King James Version, Proverbs 24:9

¹⁴ Spirit of Prophecy, Volume 1, E.G. White, pg. 24

¹⁵ God is a Family, Signs of the Times, July 2012, pg. 15,16

¹⁶ God is a Family, Signs of the Times, July 2012, pg. 16

¹⁷ http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/God_the_Son

¹⁸ Testimonies to the Church, Volume 8, E.G. White, pg. 268

¹⁹ Strong's Concordance,

²⁰ http://www.theopedia.com/Eternal_generation_of_the_Son

²¹ http://www.theopedia.com/Eternal_generation_of_the_Son

²² <http://www.upper-register.com/papers/monogenes.html>

²³ http://www.scandalon.co.uk/philosophy/cosmological_aquinas.htm

²⁴ http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cosmological_argument

²⁵ <http://ssnet.org/about-us/fundamental-beliefs-seventh-day-adventists/trinity-fundamental-belief/>

²⁶ <http://www.adventist.org.au/fs-theological-questions>

²⁷ <http://www.adventist.org.au/fs-theological-questions>

²⁸http://www.scandalon.co.uk/philosophy/cosmological_aquinas.htm

²⁹http://www.theopedia.com/Eternal_generation_of_the_Son

³⁰http://www.theopedia.com/Eternal_generation_of_the_Son

³¹<http://www.adventist.org.au/fs-theological-questions>