

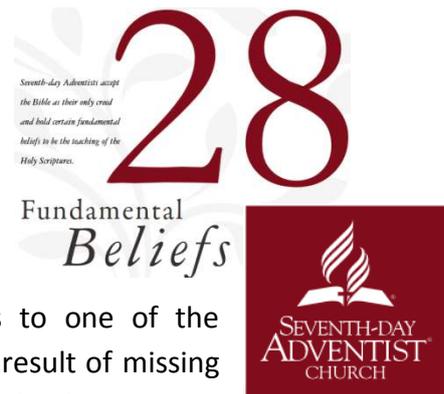
A GOD WHO HAS NO SON

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One of the gravest errors committed when studying the Bible is when the reader concludes a meaning that was never intended in the Bible passage. The true meaning of the text is replaced with an imagined idea based on a predetermined conclusion. The gravity of this danger is illustrated in the popular belief that God is a Trinity. This idea is currently expressed in the following way:

“There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three coeternal Persons.” 28 Fundamental Beliefs, p. 3 (<http://www.adventist.org/fileadmin/adventist.org/files/articles/official-statements/28Beliefs-Web.pdf>)



This popular view presents some alarming ramifications to one of the foundational Bible truths. This conclusion about God is the result of missing the true and intended meaning of many Bible passages and substituting it with an imagined and manufactured meaning. This predetermined conclusion and belief forces people to read the Bible in a way to conform to the stated idea. Every verse in the Bible is made to fit into that mould, regardless of the intended meaning of the verse. This process is very aptly described by Seventh-day Adventist author Ellen G. White:

“But how do men fall into such error? By starting with false premises, and then bringing everything to bear to prove the error true.” {The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials, p.1436.1}

When this principle is applied to Bible study we begin to understand the process by which an error becomes a fundamental belief. This error then becomes the means of interpreting every verse and revelation to fit with the premise. Verses are used in whatever means possible to prove the error true. This rampant tragedy has very alarming consequences.

“A lie, believed, practiced, becomes as truth to them.” {The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials, p.1436.1}

Seeing is Believing

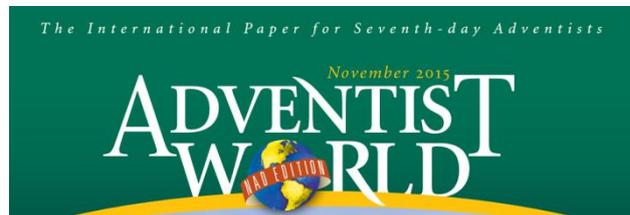
I want to look at one demonstration of how this error results in abusing plain Bible verses that express a simple and powerful truth. Rather than take my word for it, let's see what this process looks like in action. Here is a plain Bible verse:

Galatians 4:4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law

This verse, in conjunction with John 3:16, is adequate evidence that God had an only begotten Son long before that son was born in Bethlehem. There is no hint that God having a son is any less real than Him sending that son to earth.

Here is how this verse is commented on by a notable theologian:

“Christ was the Son of God before He was born of a woman. ... We are dealing with a metaphorical use of the word “son.””



“The Son is not the natural, literal Son of the Father.”

Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, *Adventist World*, A Question of Sonship, November 2015¹.



Prior to his retirement, **Ángel Manuel Rodríguez** was director of the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference.

This Seventh-day Adventist theologian is not merely stating his personal opinion on the matter. This is the official position of the church on this subject. The vital relationship between the Father and the Son is referred to as “the metaphor of sonship”. The plain and obvious meaning of the verses is replaced with an esoteric symbol. In other words, God does not actually have a son. It’s nothing but a metaphor.

If Christ’s sonship is a metaphor then the sending of that son to earth is no less of a metaphor. In like manner, his birth on earth of a woman must also be a metaphor to maintain a consistent reading of the verse. Such are the ludicrous demands imposed on the reader by the premise of the Trinity. It forces one to abandon reason and embrace the preposterous. This method of explaining the Bible was described by Ellen White:

“The truths most plainly revealed in the Bible have been involved in doubt and darkness by learned men, who, with a pretense of great wisdom, teach that the Scriptures have a mystical, a secret, spiritual meaning not apparent in the language employed. These men are false teachers.” {Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 598.3}

It is no light thing to abuse God’s word in this way. It is the means of distorting God’s truth and replacing it with error. To deform the sublime truth about God’s son into a mystical metaphor is a serious thing. This is but one demonstration of how the premise of the Trinity leads to a denial of the Son of God. It essentially teaches that the God of the Bible does NOT have a real son. Thus the divine sonship of Christ is nothing but a meaningless metaphor.

¹ The entire article can be found online at: <http://archives.adventistworld.org/2015/november/a-question-of-sonship.html>. It is also published on the BRI website at this link: <https://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/materials/godgodhead-jesus-christ/question-sonship>.

A Warning

The Apostle John warns us against this very danger. His gospel was written for one express purpose. Here's how he puts it in John 20:30 "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: 31 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." Years later in writing to the church he still reminds them of the importance of that very same truth, the divine sonship of Christ cannot be lightly denied "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also." 1 John 2:23

John was not referring to a metaphor, but to the reality of the son. Denying that reality by turning it into a metaphor is exactly what John was warning about!

The Way Out

So how can we escape falling into such dangers? The answer is simple. Don't start with a premise and go to the Bible trying to prove it. You will end up abusing the meaning of the Word. Rather, let the spirit of truth guide you to the intended meaning of the word.

"The language of the Bible should be explained according to its obvious meaning, unless a symbol or figure is employed." {Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 598.3}

This is the natural way to read and understand the Bible. If the sonship of Christ to the Father is only a metaphor then the fatherhood of God is also a metaphor. This makes God and His Son actors in a cosmic drama. The words "Father" and "Son" become the titles of the roles they play, not a true expression of a real father and a real son.

Think about it, if God's son is only a metaphor then everything carried out by him in that metaphorical sonship must also be a metaphor. Is his death and resurrection also part of this extravagant play? What about his ministry in the sanctuary as our high priest? These must also be extensions of that primary metaphor. As such, they are nothing more than different scenes being played in an elaborate cosmic performance of the metaphorical son! This inevitable and disastrous conclusion illustrates the diabolical snare of turning the realities of the Bible into metaphors!

God is a real Father who has a real son. His real love for this world was revealed in giving us his very real and beloved son. Let us accept that love and allow it to transform us rather than transforming it into a meaningless metaphor. ✍

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