



E. J. Waggoner (1855-1916)

E. G. White

At the 1888 General Conference Session, A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner presented a series of presentations on Christ and His righteousness. Ellen White wrote, “The Lord in His great mercy sent **a most precious message** to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.” (Ellen White, *1888 Materials*, page 1336)

Shortly after 1888 E. J. Waggoner took the notes from his presentations, and printed them as a book, entitled, *Christ and His Righteousness*. Of these presentations, Ellen White wrote, “***That which has been presented harmonizes perfectly with the light which God has been pleased to give me during all the years of my experience.***” (Ellen White, *1888 Materials*, page 164) Many of the following quotations are taken from this book.

The Word was “in the beginning.” The mind of man cannot grasp the ages that are spanned in this phrase. *It is not given to men to know when or how the Son was begotten;* but we know that he was the Divine Word, not simply before He came to this earth to die, but even before the world was created. Just before His crucifixion He prayed, “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. And more than seven hundred years before His first advent, His coming was thus foretold by the word of inspiration: “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity.” Micah 5:2, margin. ***We know that Christ “proceeded forth and came from God” (John 8:42), but it was so far back in the ages of eternity as to be far beyond the grasp of the mind of man.*** (E. J. Waggoner, 1890, *Christ and His Righteousness*, page 9)

Is Christ God?

God - See Heb. 1:1-8.

This name was not given to Christ in consequence of some great achievement, but it is His by right of inheritance. Speaking of the power and greatness of Christ, the writer to the Hebrews says that He is made so much better than the angels, because “He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.” Heb. 1:4. **A son always rightfully takes the name of the father; and Christ, as “the only begotten Son of God,” has rightfully the same name. A son, also, is, to a greater or less degree, a reproduction of the father; he has to some extent the features and personal characteristics of his father; not perfectly, because there is no perfect reproduction among mankind. But there is no imperfection in God, or in any of His works, and so Christ is the “express image” of the Father’s person. Heb. 1:3. As the Son of the self-existent God, He has by nature all the attributes of Deity.**

It is true that there are many sons of God, but Christ is the “only begotten Son of God,” and therefore the Son of God in a sense in which no other being ever was or ever can be. The angels are sons of God, as was Adam (Job 38:7; Luke 3:38), by creation; Christians are the sons of God by adoption (Rom. 8:14, 15), but ***Christ is the Son of God by birth.*** The writer to the Hebrews further shows that the position of the Son of God is not one to which Christ has been elevated but that it is one which He has by right. He says that Moses was

faithful in all the house of God, as a servant, “but Christ as a Son over His own house.” Heb. 3:6. And he also states that Christ is the Builder of the house. Verse 3. ***It is He that builds the temple of the Lord and bears the glory.*** Zech. 6:12, 13. (E. J. Waggoner, 1890, *Christ and His Righteousness*, pages 11-13)

Christ as Creator

A word of caution may be necessary here. ***Let no one imagine that we would exalt Christ at the expense of the Father or would ignore the Father.*** That cannot be, for their interests are one. We honor the Father in honoring the Son. *We are mindful of Paul’s words, that “to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him” (1 Cor. 8:6);* just as we have already quoted, that it was by Him that God made the worlds. ***All things proceed ultimately from God, the Father; even Christ Himself proceeded and came forth from the Father,*** but it has pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell, and that He should be the direct, immediate Agent in every act of creation. Our object in this investigation is to set forth Christ’s rightful position of equality with the Father, in order that His power to redeem may be the better appreciated.

Is Christ a Created Being?

Before passing to some of the practical lessons that are to be learned from these truths, we must dwell for a few moments upon an opinion that is honestly held by many who would not for any consideration willingly dishonor Christ, but who, through that opinion, do actually deny His Divinity. It is the idea that Christ is a created being, who, through the good pleasure of God, was elevated to His present lofty position. ***No one who holds this view can possibly have any just conception of the exalted position which Christ really occupies.***

The view in question is built upon a misconception of a single text, Rev. 3:14: “And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God.” ***This is wrongly interpreted to mean that Christ is the first being that God created***—that God’s work of creation began with Him. But this view antagonizes the scripture which declares that Christ Himself created all things. ***To say that God began His work of creation by creating Christ is to leave Christ entirely out of the work of creation.***

The word rendered “beginning” is arche, meaning, as well, “head” or “chief.” It occurs in the name of the Greek ruler, Archon, in archbishop and the word archangel. Take this last word. Christ is the archangel. See Jude 9; 1 Thess. 4:16; John 5:28, 29; Dan. 10:21. ***This does not mean that He is the first of the angels, for He is not an angel but is above them.*** Heb. 1:4. It means that He is the chief or prince of the angels, just as an archbishop is the head of the bishops. Christ is the commander of the angels. See Rev. 19:14-19. ***He created the angels.*** Col. 1:16. And so the statement that He is the beginning or head of the creation of God means that ***in Him creation had its beginning;*** that, as He Himself says, He is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Rev. 21:6; 22:13. ***He is the source whence all things have their origin.***

Neither should we imagine that Christ is a creature, because Paul calls Him (Col. 1:15) “The First-born of every creature” for the very next verses show Him to be Creator and not a creature. “For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things

were created by Him, and for Him and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist.” *Now if He created everything that was ever created and existed before all created things, it is evident that He Himself is not among created things. He is above all creation and not a part of it.*

The Scriptures declare that Christ is “the only begotten son of God.” *He is begotten, not created. As to when He was begotten, it is not for us to inquire, nor could our minds grasp it if we were told. The prophet Micah tells us all that we can know about it in these words, “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity.” Micah 5:2, margin. There was a time when Christ proceeded forth and came from God, from the bosom of the Father (John 8:42; 1:18), but that time was so far back in the days of eternity that to finite comprehension it is practically without beginning.*

But the point is that Christ is a begotten Son and not a created subject. He has by inheritance a more excellent name than the angels; He is “a Son over His own house.” Heb. 1:4; 3:6. *And since He is the only-begotten son of God, He is of the very substance and nature of God and possesses by birth all the attributes of God,* for the Father was pleased that His Son should be the express image of His Person, the brightness of His glory, and filled with all the fullness of the Godhead. So He has “life in Himself.” He possesses immortality in His own right and can confer immortality upon others. Life inheres in Him, so that it cannot be taken from Him, but having voluntarily laid it down, He can take it again. His words are these: “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.” John 10:17, 18. (E. J. Waggoner, 1890, *Christ and His Righteousness*, pages 19-22)

Finally, we know the Divine unity of the Father and the Son from the fact that both have the same Spirit. Paul, after saying that they that are in the flesh cannot please God, continues: “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, **if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.**” Rom. 8:9. **Here we find that the Holy Spirit is both the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ....** (E. J. Waggoner, 1890, *Christ and His Righteousness*, pages 23, 24)

“In arguing the perfect equality of the Father and the Son, and the fact that Christ is in very nature God, we do not design to be understood as teaching that the Father was not before the Son. It should not be necessary to guard this point, lest some should think that the Son existed as soon as the Father; yet some go to that extreme, which adds nothing to the dignity of Christ, but rather detracts from the honor due him, since many throw the whole thing away rather than accept a theory so obviously out of harmony with the language of Scripture, that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God. He was begotten, not created. He is of the substance of the Father, so that in his very nature he is God; and since this is so “it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell.” Col. 1:19 ... While both are of the same nature, the Father is first in point of time. He is also greater in that he had no beginning, while Christ's personality had a beginning.” — (E.J. Waggoner, *Signs of the Times*, April 8, 1889)

“In Ps. 45:6 we read these words, “Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; the scepter of Thy kingdom is a right scepter.” The casual reader might take this to be simply the Psalmist's ascription of praise to God, but when we turn to the New Testament, we find that it is much

more. We find that God the Father is the speaker and that He is addressing the Son, calling Him God. See Heb. 1:1-8.

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