

Eternal and Self-existent Son of God

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This study is part two of a study on the Deity of Christ. The first study was called the “Divinity of Christ” and is a prerequisite to this study so if you have not read that study you should read that as it is foundational. This study will be going over the concepts of “eternal and self-existent”. These two terms are the number one issue in the Trinitarian mind in blocking them from accepting Jesus a God’s only begotten Son. I believe they are genuinely sincere in their understanding of these terms and why I have put this together. The first thing I will do is lay out the definitions of these two terms used by both sides:

Trinitarian

Eternal: “lasting or existing forever; without end or beginning.”

Self-existent: “existing independently of any cause, as God.”

Non-trinitarian

Eternal: “a long time generally beyond human comprehension either past or future”

Self-existent: “the ability or nature to perpetuate one’s own existence”

The Trinitarian definitions I provided can be found in just about any dictionary where the non-trinitarian definition cannot be found in a dictionary to the best of my knowledge. Now one would think that the non-trinitarian is at a great disadvantage because of this but for me I see it completely the opposite. It is actually a violation of rules of interpretation to get our definitions on biblical words and concepts from manmade dictionaries. This is because words change or evolve in meaning over time in all languages. The rule of interpretation is to see how a word is used in scripture in order to gain the idea or thought behind that word. In the case of “self-existent” the word is not a biblical word though the idea is present in God and Christ’s words declaring that they are “I AM”. No word study in the Bible is available for “self-existent” but since this word is used in the SOP we will look at it in order to determine its meaning. We will also use the SOP in discovering the meaning to “eternal”. First we will go to the Bible to discover the meaning for eternal. There are a few different Hebrew words used for the idea of “eternal” so let’s have a look at each of them.

“The eternal (qedem) God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them.” (Deut 33:27)

This word is less common than “olam” (247 times) which is the main word in Hebrew in connection with God and Christ’s eternity. The word “qedem” exists 87 times in scripture and

in the above passage it is a descriptive word for God so we will look for similar context of these words used in scripture to gain the idea behind it.

*“And the LORD God planted a garden **eastward (qedem)** in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.” (Gen 2:8)*

Obviously the above passage has no contextual equality with Deut 33:27 but I list it to show that this particular word is most of often translated in the idea of “east” as in direction. I don’t think Deuteronomy is saying “the east God is thy refuge”.

*“And for the chief things of the **ancient (qedem)** mountains, and for the precious things of the **lasting (olam)** hills,” (Deut 33:15)*

In the above we see our first glimpse of “olam” in this study used in what is called a Hebrew parallel. It shows that these words have the same idea behind them in this context.

*“And Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the LORD, the **everlasting (olam)** God.” (Gen 21:33)*

Now notice:

*“The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the **everlasting (olam)** hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.” (Gen 49:26)*

Thus we have a “qedem God/olam God” and we have “qedem mountains/olam hills”. Obviously the idea behind these “everlasting hills” is not that they are “without beginning/without end”. This shows us that these two Hebrew words do not have the meaning of “without beginning/without end”. Yes we know there must be a God who has no origin but these descriptive words in and of themselves do not imply this meaning. The words themselves simply imply a “long time” or “lasting duration”. Now the Bible describes that the mountains/hills were “created” so we know they have a beginning yet they are “olam/qedem”. Now is there anything in scripture that describes God as coming into existence by means of creation or any other method? No there isn’t and thus by default He must have no origin. Its’ not the word “olam or qedem” in and of itself that tells us this but rather overall Bible context.

*“I have considered the days of **old (qedem)**, the years of **ancient times (olam)**.” (psalms 77:5)*

This is simply another Hebrew parallel.

*“Surely the princes of Zoan are fools, the counsel of the wise counsellors of Pharaoh is become brutish: how say ye unto Pharaoh, I am the son of the wise, the son of **ancient (qedem)** kings? (Isa 19:11)*

*“Is this your joyous city, whose antiquity is of **ancient (qedem)** days? her own feet shall carry her afar off to sojourn.” (isa 23:7)*

*“Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD; awake, as in the **ancient (qedem)** days, in the generations of **old (olam)**. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon?” (Isa 51:9)*

*“Art thou not from **everlasting (qedem)**, O LORD my God, mine Holy One? we shall not die. O LORD, thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction.” (Hab 1:12)*

As we can see God is from “qedem” and if we attempt to find any scripture that would explain His origin we would not find it. Thus the scriptures teach us that God has no origin/beginning.

*“Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even **from everlasting (olam) to everlasting (olam)**, thou art God.” (psalms 90:2)*

Earlier we saw the “olam/qedem mountains” but here we see God brought them into existence thus we know they are not without beginning. There simply is no explanation to God having an origin, not a single scripture.

*“There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were **of old (from olam)**, men of renown.” (Gen 6:4)*

The words “from everlasting” and “of old” are both “min olam” in the Hebrew. The Bible teaches us that man was “created” so we know they have an origin thus we are not making an assumption here.

*“And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood **in old time (min olam)**, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods.” (Josh 24:2)*

Here we again see the idea of a “long time ago”.

*“Thy throne is established of old: thou art **from everlasting (min olam)**.” (Psalm 93:2)*

God’s throne which is His dominion is “from olam” yet we cannot find an origin in scripture for Him.

*“Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from far, O house of Israel, saith the LORD: it is a mighty nation, it is **an ancient (min olam)** nation, a nation whose language thou knowest not, neither understandest what they say.” (Jer 5:15)*

Of course this nation had an origin as scripture plainly tells us these things yet the nation above is “min olam”. This nation has an origin from a long time ago. I cannot find a single case in the Bible of a word that in of itself means “without beginning/without end”. This concept can only be applied to a given truth if the overall Bible teaches us the idea. In the case of God the Bible never tells us of an origin and in fact we see scripture teaches that He is the source of all things.

*“But 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)*

Now that we have done a study on these important words from the Old Testament we will look at the passages of the Old Testament which describe Jesus.

*“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 (mōtsa’āh)** have been from of **old (qedem)**, from **everlasting (olam)**.” (Micah 5:2)KJV*

Now I’m going to quote the RSV also as there is a Hebrew word not translated in the KJV which is translated in many other version as well as a slightly different translation to “mōtsa’āh”.

*“But you, O Bethlehem Eph’rathah, who are little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose **origin (mōtsa’āh)** is from of old, from ancient **days (yom)**.”*

Some versions may translate the end of this passage as “from the days of eternity/everlasting”. Both the KJV and RSV are fine and give the same thought. Now immediately we see an issue for the Trinitarian doctrine as these passage give the idea that Jesus had an “origin” or a “goings forth” which is a beginning. You will never find this in scripture in relation to God the Father. Now the rule of interpretation is to see how a word is used in scripture in order to develop the thought behind it but in the case of (**mōtsa’āh**) that is going to be hard as it’s only found twice in scripture. The other case is here:

*“And they brake down the image of Baal, and brake down the house of Baal, and made it a **draught house (mōtsa’āh)** unto this day.” (1 Kings 10:27)*

Obviously there is no contextual connection in this case as the word means a “draught house” in this context. Strong’s says:

*mōtsa’āh mo-tsaw-aw' Feminine of [H4161](#); a **family descent**; also a sewer (compare [H6675](#)): - draught house; going forth.*

Now I never make a primary appeal to any concordance or dictionary as I believe this is a violation of rules of interpretation. The Bible is our dictionary and interpreter. Thus we will look for more evidence to see if Christ indeed has a “family descent”, origin, or goings forth “from everlasting”. There is only one other passage in the Old Testament that presents this same idea in context and that is here:

*The LORD **possessed (qāhāh)** me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was **set up (nāśak)** from everlasting (**min olam**), from the beginning, or ever (**qedem**) the earth was.²⁴ When there were no depths, I was **brought forth (chūl)** ; when there were no fountains abounding with water.²⁵ Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was **I brought forth (chūl)**:²⁶ While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world.” (Pro 8:22-26)*

There are many key words in the above passage but we have already dealt with olam and qedem. Now many Trinitarians will attempt to side step this by claiming this is referring to wisdom when in reality it is referring to a person who is the wisdom of God.

“But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.” (1 Cor 1:24)

*“When **he** prepared the heavens, **I** was there: when **he** set a compass upon the face of the depth:28 When **he** established the clouds above: when **he** strengthened the fountains of the deep:29 When **he** gave to the sea **his** decree, that the waters should not pass **his** commandment: when **he** appointed the foundations of the earth:30 Then **I** was by **him**, as **one brought up with him**: and **I** was daily **his** delight, **rejoicing always before him**;31 **Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.**” (Pro 8:27-31)*

As we study the passage in Pro 8:22-31 we see that this cannot be referring to the attribute “wisdom” but rather a person. The word “possessed/qanah” is first up for study and appears 84 times in scripture almost always referring to purchasing something. The first use of the word in scripture is here:

*“And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have **gotten (qanah)** a man from the LORD.” (Gen 4:1)*

When Eve gave birth to Cain she said I have “qanah” a man from the LORD. Eve acquired someone who did not previously exist. In Gen 4:19-22 we see that God is “*possessor (qanah) of Heaven and earth*” because He obviously created them. In Gen 25:10 Abraham “purchased” (**qanah**) a field. Every single case in scripture this word is used in the idea of “getting something” or “acquiring something” at some point. Thus Jehovah acquired Jesus “*in the beginning of His ways*”. God couldn’t have suddenly acquired the attribute “wisdom” but rather He knew it was “wise” for Him to have a Son and thus Jesus is the “*wisdom of God*”.

The next key phrase says I was **set up (nāsak)** from olam. This word appears 25 times in scripture mostly meaning to “pour out a drink offering”. There is only one passage in scripture where it is used that would have any contextual relevance to this and it is located here in Psalm 2:

*“Yet have I **set (nasak)** my king upon my holy hill of Zion.⁷ I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.” (Psalm 2:6-7)*

I’m now going to be going over Psalm 2:7 but in the above we see that Jesus has been “set/nasak” as a King upon God’s holy hill of Zion. The reason Jesus is “setup” as king is because “*thou art my Son this day have I begotten thee*”. Jesus has been King from everlasting because God the supreme ruler “set” Him up as King. Trinitarians want to take this passage and move the “begetting” to the future but that’s not what the passage says. It says God would “declare **THE** decree” which is an ancient decree. In the rebellion in heaven God had to “declare the decree” when He brought His Son before the angelic host and “declared” to them that Jesus is His only begotten Son which a third of the angels were denying. It didn’t mean Jesus was “begotten” at that time but the meaning of the decree was “declared” at that time due to rebellion.

*“The King of the universe **summoned the heavenly hosts before Him**, that in their presence He might **set forth the true position of His Son** and **show the relation He sustained to all created beings**. The Son of God shared the Father's throne, and the glory of the eternal, self-existent One encircled both. About the throne gathered the holy*

angels, a vast, unnumbered throng--"ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" (Revelation 5:11.), the most exalted angels, as ministers and subjects, rejoicing in the light that fell upon them from the presence of the Deity. Before the assembled inhabitants of heaven the **King declared that none but Christ, the Only Begotten of God**, could fully enter into His purposes, and to Him it was committed to execute the mighty counsels of His will. The Son of God had wrought the Father's will in the creation of all the hosts of heaven; and to Him, as well as to God, their homage and allegiance were due. Christ was still to exercise divine power, in the creation of the earth and its inhabitants. But in all this He would not seek power or exaltation for Himself contrary to God's plan, but would exalt the Father's glory and execute His purposes of beneficence and love." {PP 36.2}

Now the rebellion on earth is the same thing. God would send His only begotten Son to the world and the world would reject who He is. They would kill Him and God would resurrect Jesus in order to prove that Jesus was indeed the "only begotten Son of God". How do we know this? Well because scripture says:

*"And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers,³³ God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, **Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.**" (Acts 12:32-33)*

Now notice what Paul says:

*"Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;⁴ And **declared to be the Son of God** with power, according to the spirit of holiness, **by the resurrection from the dead:**" (Rom 1:3-4)*

This is not "why" He is the Son of God or "how" He became the Son of God but rather "proves" He is the Son of God. Notice why this was necessary:

*"The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law **he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.**" (John 19:7)*

Now the same problem that began with fallen angels continues today. The entire Great Controversy is Satan claiming Jesus is not the "only begotten Son of God". Notice what the angels would do:

*"Angels were expelled from heaven because they would not work in harmony with God. They fell from their high estate because they wanted to be exalted. They had come to exalt themselves, and they forgot that their beauty of person and of character came from the Lord Jesus. **This fact the [fallen] angels would obscure, that Christ was the only begotten Son of God**, and they came to consider that they were not to consult Christ." {TDG 128.2}*

*"Christ was the **only begotten Son of God**, and Lucifer, that glorious angel, **got up a warfare over the matter**, until he had to be thrust down to the earth." {Ms86-1910, Ellen White (August 21, 1910) par. 30}*

Lucifer suggested that Jesus is no different than him a created being the same thing Trinitarians accuse us of today. Satan would not and to this day still doesn't accept Jesus is the only begotten Son of God, repeated in the Trinitarian doctrine. In fact Psalms chapter 2 has its real ultimate fulfillment at the second coming. God's people are to "declare the decree" and notice the warning we are to give:

*"I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.⁸ Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.⁹ Thou **shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.**¹⁰ Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.¹¹ Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.¹² **Kiss the Son**, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, **when his wrath is kindled but a little.** Blessed are all they that put their trust in him." (Psalms 2:7-12)*

Now notice how all of this happens at the second coming:

*"And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.¹⁴ And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.¹⁵ And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should **smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron:** and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." (Rev 19:13-15)*

*"And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the **wrath of the Lamb:**¹⁷ For the **great day of his wrath is come;** and who shall be able to stand?" (Rev 6:16-17)*

This will happen to all the inhabitants of the world who fail to heed "the decree" and bow down to the only begotten Son of God. All who join in with the fallen angels to "*obscure the fact that Jesus is the only begotten Son*" will experience the wrath of the Lamb as they will eventually join in persecuting those because "*they said Jesus is the Son of God*". Every Godhead doctrine whether pagan or professed Christian other than what the SDA pioneers believed rejects that Jesus is the "only begotten Son of God". Thus we see that Jesus was "setup" as King "from everlasting" because God said unto Him "*thou art my Son this day have I begotten thee*". The Hebrew word "yalad/begotten" appears 497 times in the Old Testament so do a search and you will see the clear idea of this word is "birth" or a man passing on his life as the scriptures often claim the man "begat" a son though we know he did this through a woman. The idea of the word is what we need to understand when it comes to God begetting a Son, not the physical mechanics involved. Lets continue in Proverbs 8 as we will get a plain thus saith the Lord that this begetting took place "from everlasting".

"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 (chul)**; when there were no fountains abounding with water.²⁵ Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I **brought forth (chul)**.²⁶ While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world.” (Pro 8:22-26)*

In the passage we see Jehovah “acquired” Jesus in the beginning of His way and “set Him up” as King and God did this when He “brought Him forth” before the earth was. The Hebrew word “chul” appears 58 times in scripture but only twice outside of this passage in this verb form. I’m going to quote a friend I know who understands verb forms much better than I do:

“The Hebrew word חול, which was translated “I was brought forth,” is a verb. Hebrew verbs can be found in many different forms. In the Old Testament, this particular verb was used in six different forms. They are Qal, Polel, Pulal, Hophal, Hithpolel, and Hithpalpel. Depending upon what form is used for this verb, the meaning of the word can be completely changed. For example, when this Hebrew verb חול is used in the Qal form, it means “to dance, to twist, to writhe, to whirl, to whirl about” (Brown-Driver-Brigg’s Hebrew Lexicon). It is obvious from the context that this definition would not apply in Proverbs 8:24, 25, and it could not apply because the Hebrew word חול is used in these verses in the Pulal form. The definition for the Pulal form is the only definition that can apply here. This definition is as follows: “to be made to writhe, be made to bear, to be brought forth” (Brown-Driver-Brigg’s Hebrew Lexicon). This verb in this form is only used three places in the Bible, and here are the other two places where it is used:” (Lynnford Beachy study)

*“Art thou the first man that was **born (yalad)**? or wast thou **made (chul)** before the hills?” (Job 15:7)*

*“Behold, I was shapen (**chul**) in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive (**ya’cham**) me.” (psalms 51:5)*

These are both called Hebrew parallels which explain the idea of the word which in this case is birth. Now don’t be alarmed at the KJV translation in Job as “made” as it very well should have been translated as “brought forth” if the KJV was more consistent. “*Are you the first man that was born? Or were you brought forth before the hills?*” (RSV) Besides the English word “made” doesn’t necessarily mean “created” but can carry the idea of “origin” or “beginning”. I’ll show you an example of this from Ellen’s writing’s:

“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.” {EGW, RH, July 9, 1895 par. 13}

As we can see Jesus was (past tense) “made in the express image” of God’s person. The question is when and how was Jesus “made in the express image of His person”?

“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’)

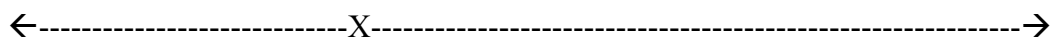
Here we see that Jesus was “begotten in the express image of the Father’s person” showing that “made in the express image of His person” is the same thing. We now know how Jesus was “made” but when was He “made in the express image” of God?

“Before Christ came in the likeness of men, he existed in the express image of his Father”. (Ellen G. White, *Youth’s Instructor*, 20th December 1900 ‘Christ’s humiliation’)

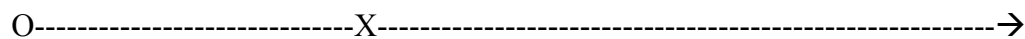
We now see that this begetting took place before the incarnation just as Proverbs 8 says because Jesus was begotten in the express image of the Father and He existed in the express image of God before the incarnation. Proverbs 8 tells us this happened “from everlasting”. Ellen quoted Christ in the context of Proverbs 8 many times.

“The Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, existed from eternity, a distinct person, yet one with the Father. He was the surpassing glory of heaven. He was the commander of the heavenly intelligences, and the adoring homage of the angels was received by Him as His right. This was no robbery of God. “The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way,” He declares, “before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth” (Proverbs 8:22-27). {ISM 247.4}

You will never find language like this concerning the Father for He was not “made in the express image of Jesus” nor was He “brought forth”, nor did Jesus “possess Him in the beginning”, nor did Jesus “set Him up”, nor did He have a “goings forth”. This is no role play, they are not pretending anything and it literally happened just as scripture says. In Proverbs notice Jesus was “setup” from everlasting which is equivalent to “the beginning”. In John chapter one we see “***In the beginning was the word and the Word was with God and the word was God***”. Trinitarians do not believe in any “literal beginning” like non-trinitarians do. Let’s look at a graph so we can see the difference:



The above is a Trinitarian model where everything from the X (creation of earth) to the left forever is “the beginning”. This is their idea of “all eternity” as there is no actual “beginning”. Now let’s look at the non-trinitarian model:



In the non-trinitarian model there is no time until Christ was brought forth and created things. “O” marks a literal “beginning”, Christ’s first creation, and beginning of time where X marks the beginning for this earth. Both models have a span of time for “the beginning” except the Trinitarian model has “no beginning” so the word has no real meaning. In the non-trinitarian model “all eternity” begins with the birth of Christ forward, not backwards because there was no time as nothing was created yet. Nothing existed except God. None of the words “possessed,

setup, or brought forth” fit in the Trinitarian model because these are all action words describing something that took place “from everlasting, from the beginning” but “from everlasting/beginning” in their model means “without beginning”. Thus Jesus was always “possessed”, always “setup”, and always “brought forth” with whatever meaning they attempt to apply to these words which I have never seen them attempt to show from the Bible.

All of the Greek words in the NT for the concept of eternal have the same idea as the Hebrew in the OT. In building this foundation to understand the concept of “eternal” we have learned:

1. There is no word in the Bible that in of itself means “without beginning/without end”
2. The concept of “without beginning/without end” is true for God because the Bible never describes a beginning or origin for Him but this concept is not inherent in the words “olam or qedem”.
3. Jesus was begotten “in the beginning, from everlasting”.

Now that we have gone over the Biblical foundation for these concepts we can look at the SOP without the preconceived idea built into the word “eternal”. Here are a few cases in order by the year they were written from the SOP:

*“The unworthiness, weakness, and inefficiency of their own efforts in contrast with those of the **eternal Son of God**, will render them humble, distrustful of self, and will lead them to rely upon Christ for strength and efficiency in their work.” {RH, August 8, 1878 par. 4}*

The above quote is the first time Ellen claimed Jesus was the “eternal Son of God”. According to Trinitarian definition this makes Ellen a Trinitarian as early as 1878. In my historical study you will see that in 1871 James says Ellen was not a Trinitarian.

August 31, 1887 "Search the Scriptures." John 5:39:

*“This injunction is from the **eternal Son of God**. Neglect of the study of God's word leads many to neglect the great salvation, and proves the ruin of thousands.” {YI, August 31, 1887 par. 1}*

*“Then look beneath the disguise, and whom do we see?--Divinity, **the Eternal Son of God**, just as mighty, just as infinitely gifted with all the resources of power, and He was found in fashion as a man.” {15MR 25.3} Letter 37 (Letter to E.J. Waggoner and A.T. Jones) 1887.*

In the above we see a letter written to Waggoner and Jones who preached a begotten Jesus. Earlier we saw that Ellen said these guys presented Jesus in “all the fullness of the Godhead”. Later we will see that these guys did indeed believe Jesus was the “eternal Son of God” just as all non-trinitarians do today without the same meaning as Trinitarians.

*“That the transgressor might have another trial, that men might be brought into favor with God the Father, **the eternal Son of God interposed himself** to bear the punishment*

of transgression. One clothed with humanity, who was yet one with the Deity, was our ransom.” {RH, February 8, 1898 par. 2}

*But while God's Word speaks of the humanity of Christ when upon this earth, it also speaks decidedly regarding his pre-existence. The Word existed as a divine being, **even as the eternal Son of God**, in union and oneness with his Father. From everlasting he was the Mediator of the covenant, the one in whom all nations of the earth, both Jews and Gentiles, if they accepted him, were to be blessed. "The Word was with God, and the Word was God." Before men or angels were created, the Word was with God, and was God. {RH, April 5, 1906 par. 5}*

The first point that should be mentioned is the Trinitarian definition for the word “eternal” is “without beginning/without end”. The second point we need to understand is why Jesus is called the “Son of God” if He has no origin. Often Trinitarians will claim He is the Son of God because of the incarnation and God called those things that were not as though they were. This is why He was called the Son of God before the incarnation but it is the incarnation that made Him the Son of God. They will claim the incarnation is when He was “begotten”. Others will claim it is the resurrection when He was “begotten” or both. Thus the title of “Son” was something He took as a “role” in Heaven to be implemented in the incarnation. Why is this a problem?

1. This means Jesus took the title of “Son” because of sin when sin had not yet existed. If sin had never happened Jesus would have been called the “Son” for what reason? The only reason would be to act a “role” which is “pretending” which is “deception” which is “sin”. If Jesus was pretending to be God’s Son for any reason before the incarnation this is sin.
2. The next problem is it says Jesus existed “even as the eternal Son of God” but by Trinitarian definition that means Jesus never could have taken on the “role” of “Son” but would have always been the “Son”. This brings us to the illogical conclusion that three beings all having no origin just happened to always be “Father and Son” while a third being has the meaningless title of “Holy Spirit”. I have seen some Trinitarians claim this belief and it is always answered as a “mystery” of how Jesus can be the Son of God yet have no beginning. This is identical to the Catholic idea of Jesus being eternally begotten. They say He has no beginning and has always been going through the begotten process yet they call Him a Son. This is one the “mysteries of the Trinity” written on her forehead in Revelation 17.
3. Another problem is found in Luke which says “And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and 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.” (1:35) Now remember this Spirit in the Trinity doctrine is a third individual who is responsible for impregnating Mary. If this is so why then is a different being called the Father? Remember Jesus is called the “Son of God” because of the incarnation yet the being that is called “Father” had nothing to do with it.

Here are a few passages from Ellen’s writings concerning New Jerusalem which of course was “created”:

*"But the true children of God are not seeking their happiness in this world; they seek for the lasting joys of a home in the **eternal city where Christ dwells**, and where the redeemed shall receive the rewards of obedience to the requirements of God. These do not desire the transitory, cheap amusements of this life, but the enduring bliss of heaven."--MS 51, 1912. (HC 284.) {1MCP 314.2}*

*"Though the disciples had gazed far into the Heaven until their Lord had vanished from their sight, they did not behold the angels that gathered around their beloved commander. Jesus led a multitude of captives who had risen from the grave at his resurrection. As the glorious company approach the **gates of the eternal city** the angels sing. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye **everlasting doors**; and the king of glory shall come in." And the angels guarding the gates respond, "Who is this king of glory?" The attendant angels reply, "The Lord of hosts, he is the king of glory." As the glorious train passes in, the angels are about to bow in adoration before the Lord of glory; but he waves them back. "{ST, January 27, 1888 par. 5}*

*"We may have a vision of the future, the blessedness of heaven. In the Bible are revealed visions of the future glory, scenes pictured by the hand of God, and these are dear to His church. By faith we may stand on the **threshold of the eternal city**, and hear the gracious welcome given to those who in this life co-operate with Christ, regarding it as an honor to suffer for His sake." {AA 601.3}*

*"Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness," Christ says, "that when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles." R.V. God and Christ and angels are all ministering to the afflicted, the suffering, and the sinful. Give yourself to God for this work, use His gifts for this purpose, and you enter into partnership with heavenly beings. Your heart will throb in sympathy with theirs. You will be assimilated to them in character. To you these dwellers in the **eternal tabernacles** will not be strangers. When earthly things shall have passed away, the watchers at heaven's gates will bid you welcome. {COL 373.1}*

Now if we apply the Trinitarian definition of "without beginning/without end" to the New Jerusalem we then would have to believe this city like God has no origin and has always been. To the best of my knowledge nobody believes the New Jerusalem is "without origin". Here are two non-trinitarian's from back in the day including Ellen's son W.C. White that called Jesus "eternal":

*"The statement and the arguments of some of our ministers in their effort to prove that the Holy Spirit was an **individual** as are God the Father and Christ, **the eternal Son**, have perplexed me and sometimes they have made me sad. One popular teacher said we may regard Him (the Holy Spirit) as the fellow who is down here running things. (Letter from **W C White** to H W Carr. April 30 **1935**)*

*"Christian institution" only by directly denying the unchangeability of God's righteousness, and the grace of Christ the **eternal Son of God**; in short by denying the Gospel. {December 16, 1897 E.J. Waggoner, PTUK 787.8}*

Now it's possible some/many non-trinitarians in that day did not say Jesus was "eternal" or even denied it but this would have been due to a faulty human definition. Both Ellen's Son and Waggoner were non-trinitarian yet believed in the eternal Son of God. Another common quote used to promote the idea of an eternity "without beginning" is here:

*"But while God's Word speaks of the humanity of Christ when upon this earth, it also speaks decidedly regarding his pre-existence. The Word existed as a divine being, **even as the eternal Son of God**, in union and oneness with his Father. **From everlasting** he was the Mediator of the covenant, the one in whom all nations of the earth, both Jews and Gentiles, if they accepted him, were to be blessed. "The Word was with God, and the Word was God." Before men or angels were created, the Word was with God, and was God.*

*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.*

*The Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, **existed from eternity**, a distinct person, yet one with the Father. He was the surpassing glory of heaven. He was the commander of the heavenly intelligences, and the adoring homage of the angels was received by him as his right. This was no robbery of God. "**The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way**," he declares, "before his works of old. I was **set up from everlasting, from the beginning**, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, **I was brought forth**; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was **I brought forth**; while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth." {RH, April 5, 1906 par. 7}*

In the Trinitarian definition of eternity "all eternity" obviously means Jesus had no origin but notice how Ellen quotes Proverbs 8 which we went over earlier. In that chapter we see that Jesus was "set up from the beginning" which I believe is a literal event from which begins "all eternity". Another important point is Ellen says Jesus "was God essentially, and in the highest sense". The word "essentially" is a very important word as we would never say the Father is God "essentially". My dad is not my dad "essentially". Jesus is definitely God in the highest sense having the exact same Deity as Him but He is not the person of God as He is His Son.

*"The Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father, is truly God in infinity, **but not in personality**." (Ellen G. White, Manuscript 116, Dec. 19, 1905, 'An Entire Consecration', see also *The Upward Look*, page 367)*

Jesus is truly God in "infinity" is the same as the "highest sense" but He is not God in personality. Infinity here is referring to Christ's nature, His Deity.

*“There is no one who can explain the mystery of the incarnation of Christ. Yet we know that He came to this earth and lived as a man among men. The **man Christ Jesus was not the Lord God Almighty, yet Christ and the Father are one.** The Deity did not sink under the agonizing torture of Calvary, yet it is nonetheless true that “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” {LHU 235.3}*

Now Trinitarians will claim these are saying Jesus is not the Father, which is true that He isn't but it is also true that He is not the Lord God Almighty or the personality of God as these are two different beings.

*“Christ is one with the Father, but **Christ and God are two distinct personages.**” Ellen G. White to the delegates at the 1905 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Takoma Park Washington D. C., May 19, 1905, Review and Herald, June 1, 1905*

*“We know that Christ came in person **to reveal God** to the world. **God is a person and Christ is a person.**” ISAT p. 343, Ms. 46, 1904. MR 900.*

*“There is **a personal God, the Father**; there is **a personal Christ, the Son.**” RH March 17, 1904*

In closing on this section of the “eternal” issue we can see that God is “a” person which is singular, not three persons and that God and Christ are two distinct personages. Christ was with God “from all eternity”, “from the beginning”. He lives in the “eternal” New Jerusalem and He has always been the Son of God since His eternal birth.

Self-existent

This section on the term “self-existent” will be entirely from the SOP since the term is not used in scripture although the idea is when Christ claimed to be the “I AM”. The first case in the SOP where we see this concept in connection with Christ is in 1897 but we will first take a look at a quote in the Desire of Ages:

“With solemn dignity Jesus answered, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I AM.”

*Silence fell upon the vast assembly. The name of God, given to Moses to express the idea of the eternal presence, had been claimed as His own by this Galilean Rabbi. **He had announced Himself to be the self-existent One, He who had been promised to Israel, “whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity.”** Micah 5:2, margin.” {DA 469.5}*

It is important to note in this first case that Ellen quotes Micah 5:2 which refers to Christ's “goings forth/family decent/origin”. Outside of this we do not get much detail here but there is another quote from 1899 which is similar to this which we will now take a look at:

*"The scribes and Pharisees accused Christ of blasphemy because He made Himself equal with God. But He promptly met and denied their accusations. "Art Thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead?" they asked Him; "whom makest Thou Thyself?" Jesus answered: "If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing; it is My Father that honoreth Me; of whom ye say, that He is your God; yet ye have not known Him, but I know Him; and if I should say, I know Him not, I shall be a liar like unto you; but I know Him, and keep His saying. Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto Him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, **Before Abraham was, I am.**"*

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." {ST, May 3, 1899 par. 4}

This is a very important quote because if Christ is without origin you would never express a thought about Him like we see above saying "the existence of Christ before His incarnation is not measured by figures". You will never find language like this concerning the Father because this language doesn't fit Him. In 1897 we have the first time where Ellen gives the expression "the eternal, self-existent Son":

*"No one of the angels could become a substitute and surety for the human race, for their life is God's; they could not surrender it. On Christ alone the human family depended for their existence. He is the **eternal, self-existent Son**, on whom no yoke had come. When God asked, "whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" Christ alone of the angelic host could reply, "Here am I; send Me." He alone had covenanted before the foundation of the world to become a surety for man. He could say that which not the highest angel could say--"**I have power over My own life. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again**" [see John 10:18]. {12MR 395.3} Ms. 101, 1897.*

Now in 1900 Ellen uses this passage again in the Youth Instructor except she changes a few things one of which is noteworthy:

*Not one of the angels could have become surety for the human race: their life is God's; they could not surrender it. The angels all wear the yoke of obedience. They are the appointed messengers of Him who is the commander of all heaven. But Christ is equal with God, infinite and omnipotent. He could pay the ransom for man's freedom. He is the **eternal, self-existing Son**, on whom no yoke had come; and when God asked, "Whom shall I send?" he could reply, "Here am I; send me." He could pledge himself to become man's surety; for he could say that which the highest angel could not say,--"**I have power over my own life, "power to lay it down, and . . . power to take it again.**" {YI, June 21, 1900 par. 2}*

In the 1897 quote she says "self-existent" where in the 1900 quote she says "self-existing". This is not a big deal as it simply shows the thought is the same no matter how she chose to word the expression. If you remember back to the non-trinitarian definition for self-existent I said it meant "the ability to perpetuate one's own existence". This is seen in Christ's words "I have power to

lay it down, and I have power to take it again” referring to His Divine life. So yes Jesus is the “self-existing Son”. Notice how Ellen understood this term in 1899:

*“There is much talk about the Lord in nature, as if God were bound by the laws of nature to be nature's servant. In this men do not know what they are talking about. Do they suppose that nature has a **self-existing power without the continual agency of Jehovah?** Many theories would lead minds to suppose that nature was **a self-sustaining agency apart from Deity, having its own inherent power with which to work.** The Lord does not exert His laws to supersede the laws of nature. He does His work through the laws and the properties of His instruments, and nature obeys a "Thus saith the Lord." {AUCR, July 31, 1899 par. 13}*

In the above we can see a clear parallel. In the above use of “self-sustaining/self-existing” it’s used in the idea of the “ability to perpetuate one’s own existence”. We see that Ellen used this again but in different order in 1901 saying:

*“There is much talk about God in nature, as if the Lord were bound by the laws of nature to be nature's servant. Many theories would lead minds to suppose that **nature is a self-sustaining agency apart from the Deity, having its own inherent power with which to work.** In this men do not know what they are talking about. Do they suppose that **nature has a self-existing power without the continual agency of Jehovah?** The Lord does not work through His laws to supersede the laws of nature. He does His work through the laws and properties of His instruments, and nature obeys a "Thus saith the Lord." {6T 186.1} 1901*

As we can see a “self-sustaining agency” would have a “self-existing power”. This is exactly what Christ has in Him and why He is the self-existent Son of God. The last use by Ellen White in referring to Christ as self-existent is found in 1900 when she said:

*"Before Abraham was, I am." Christ is the **pre-existent, self-existent Son of God.** The message He gave to Moses to give to the children of Israel was, "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." The prophet Micah writes of Him, "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, tho 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 everlasting.**" {ST, August 29, 1900 par. 13}*

*Through Solomon **Christ declared:** "The **Lord possessed Me** in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was **set up from everlasting, from the beginning,** or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was **brought forth;** when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I **brought forth.** . . . When He gave to the sea His decree, that the waters should not pass His commandment; when He appointed the foundations of the earth; then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him." {ST, August 29, 1900 par. 14}*

*In speaking of His **pre-existence,** Christ carries the mind back through **dateless ages. He assures** us that there **never was a time when He was not in close fellowship with the eternal God.** He to whose voice the Jews were then listening had been with God as one brought up with Him." {ST, August 29, 1900 par. 15}*

In this quote we see Ellen applies both Micah 5:2 and Proverbs 8:22-26 which we have already discussed. She also uses a very important word concerning Christ and that is “pre-existence”. This is a common word that Ellen applies to Christ but it is also a word that is never applied to the Father for it makes no sense to talk of a being that has no origin in the context of being “pre-existent”. On top of this if the Trinitarian definition of “self-existent” were true it would be pointless for Ellen to add the words “pre-existent” as it would be meaningless. Christ “*assures us that there **never was a time when He was not in close fellowship with the eternal God.***” Notice the passage doesn’t say “The Father assures us that there **never was a time when He was not in close fellowship with the eternal Son.**” In the true statement it is Christ who is the focus while in the false statement the Father is the focus. I can promise you that there has never been a time when I have not been in close fellowship with my parents. This is a true statement for “me” to claim but my dad could not claim this with me. The statement Ellen makes saying “*He to whose voice the Jews were then listening had been with God as one brought up with Him*” is taken from Proverbs 8 which says Jesus was “brought forth”.

I want to quote some pioneers who were non-trinitarian so we can see how they understood these things:

*“The Church of Christ is not built on a foundation of dust, nor even on a rock that is made out of dust. It is built upon the **eternal, self-existent, Rock, which is "Jesus Christ himself."*** {October 11, 1894 A.T. Jones, AMS 314.16}

In the above we see A.T Jones calling Jesus the “eternal, self-existent, Rock” before Ellen made a “self-existent” comment about Christ. This is a good example of how Trinitarian reads their own thoughts into the SOP and apply definitions to words that are untrue or worldly definitions. G.I. Butler said:

*“In him all the fulness of the Godhead dwells. Not an attribute or power has the divinity of the Father withheld from the Son. When he begat him of his own substance, the infinite majesty, glory, and excellence, the supreme wisdom, omnipotence, omniscience, and **self-supporting existence** from which all the powers of the universe take their origin, was as a necessary consequence **conveyed to him.**”* (G. I. Butler, *RH*, August 22, 1893, pp. 535, 536).

The next list of quotes is all from E.J. Waggoner:

*“Life and immortality **are imparted** to the faithful followers of God, but **Christ alone shares with the Father** the power to impart life. He has “life in himself,” that is, he is **able to perpetuate his own existence.**”* (E. J. Waggoner. *Signs of the Times*, March 25th 1889, article ‘The Divinity of Christ’)

*“Christ ‘is [sic] in the bosom of the Father;’ being by nature of **the very substance of God, and having life in Himself.** He is properly called **Jehovah, the self-existent One,** and is thus styled in Jer. 23:56, where it is said that the righteous Branch, who shall*

execute judgment and justice in the earth, shall be known by the name of Jehovah-tsidekenu—THE LORD, OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.” (Christ and His Righteousness. p23,24. 1890. E J Waggoner.)

“It will readily be seen that the whole virtue of baptism lies in the self-existent power of Christ,-that He could lay down His life, and take it up again.” {November 28, 1901 EJW, PTUK 757.9}

“The second logical and necessary conclusion from the foregoing quotations from the little book, is that each individual cell, and consequently every man, has life as an inherent quality. They teach that man is self-existent, with power to perpetuate his existence, and to evolve good out of his own inherent force; in short, that man is God.” {February 9, 1892 EJW, ARSH 83.11}

“That is to say, the almost universal tendency is to eliminate God as Creator, and practically to deify creation, making it self supporting, which in reality means self-existent, although few stop to think that the terms mean the same thing.” {June 20, 1901 EJW, PTUK 385.2}

Now it should be noted that Waggoner and Jones who were both non-trinitarian gave the most precious message in 1888 of which Ellen claims:

“Messages bearing the divine credentials have been sent to God's people; the glory, the majesty, the righteousness of Christ, full of goodness and truth, have been presented; the fullness of the Godhead in Jesus Christ has been set forth among us with beauty and loveliness, to charm all whose hearts were not closed with prejudice. We know that God has wrought among us.” {RH, May 27, 1890 par. 6} {EGW 1888 Materials 673.6}

These non-trinitarian brethren who believed Jesus was the “eternal, self-existent Son of God” proclaimed Jesus in all “the fullness of the Godhead”. This shows us that Jesus can have an origin being begotten in eternity past yet still be fully God. The next set of quotes we are going to look at is the famous “original, unborrowed, underived” quotes. I have gathered all these quotes and ones similar to them to help us understand what they are talking about. The first thing you will notice in the context of these is a comparison of man’s life to Christ’s life. You will also notice there is not talk about Christ’s origin or eternal existence in these passages. The first quote that has relevance is found in the 1888 materials which says:

*“I was shown that the follies of Israel in the days of Samuel will be repeated unless men have greater humility and less confidence in themselves, and greater confidence in the Lord God of Israel, the Ruler of His people. The **ability and wisdom of any man is only derived from God**. Connected with God, his life bound up with God, he will work the works of God. **God has wisdom underived**. He is the Infinite One; the human is finite, erring. He is the Fountain of the light and*

life and glory of the world. One leak will sink the mightiest vessel that ever rode the proud ocean; so will the church make shipwreck amid the perils of these last days unless the holy Captain of her salvation shall not only serve as Captain but Pilot.” {1888 919.1}

In the above we see that man “derived” his “ability and wisdom” from God where God has “wisdom underived”. It shows us that God is the “source” for wisdom; He doesn’t obtain it from anyone else as it is inherent in Him.

*“There was a time when Satan was in harmony with God, and it was his joy to execute the divine commands. His heart was filled with love and joy in serving his Creator, until he began to think that **his wisdom was not derived from God, but was inherent in himself**, and that **he was as worthy as was God to receive honor and power**. When he found that **he could not be as God**, he was filled with rebellion, and would not submit his will to the will of God. “ {ST, September 18, 1893 par. 1}*

In the above we see how Lucifer derived his wisdom from God but he began to think this wisdom was “inherent in himself”. The context of all of these are saying that all created beings continually derive wisdom and life from God because it is not inherent in them. Be assured that all of these things are inherent in Christ as He has the same nature as God. Christ doesn’t derive wisdom from the Father like created beings do. The next quote is in 1896 which says:

*“Our life is something we receive from Christ **by a study of His Word**. “In him was life”-- **original, unborrowed. He was the Fountain of life. We receive life from the Saviour which He takes back again. That life which God has given us should be put to the very best account, for as human agents we are forming our own destiny.** {UL 54.3}{Manuscript 2, Feb. 9, 1896, untitled manuscript.}*

In this quote we see that Christ has life “original, unborrowed” as He is the “Fountain of life”. A fountain is a source so we see that Christ is the source of our life. The life we receive from Christ is not inherent in us, we borrow it, and we continually derive it from Christ. We obtain it through “the study of His Word”. This should show us very clearly that the reason Christ has “original, unborrowed, underived life” is because it is “inherent” in Him as He is the source of our life. The next quote is from 1897 which says:

*“In him was life; and the life was the light of men” (John 1:4). It is **not physical life** that is here specified, **but immortality, the life which is exclusively the property of God**. The Word, who was with God, and **who was God, had this life**. **Physical life** is something which each individual receives. **It is not eternal or immortal; for God, the Life-giver, takes it again**. 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**. He can **possess it only through Christ**. He cannot earn it; it is given him as a free gift if he will believe in Christ as His personal Saviour. “This is **life eternal**, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3). This is*

the open fountain of life for the world. {1SM 296.2} Chap. 43 - Christ the Life-giver [THIS ARTICLE APPEARED IN THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES, APRIL 8, 1897.]

What we notice above is that life “original, unborrowed, underived” is eternal, immortal life. Human beings are not the source for this life and thus we do not have life “original, unborrowed, underived”. We see that the life of Christ was “unborrowed” showing us that He is the source of life for humanity. Notice the context is from the view point of Christ as a human while on earth. He had life “inherent” in Him where all other men do not. Now once we are connected to Christ through the study of His word we receive His life. This however doesn’t mean we have life “original, unborrowed, underived” because we are not the source of this life, Christ is. Yes it is the same life which Christ has but the difference is this life is “inherent” in Him where it is not in us. The next quote is from Desire of Ages in 1898 which says:

*“Still seeking to give a true direction to her faith, Jesus declared, “I am the resurrection, **and the life.**” In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived. “He that hath the Son hath life.” 1 John 5:12. The **divinity of Christ is the believer’s assurance of eternal life.** “{DA 530.3} 1898*

Here we see that life “original, unborrowed, underived” is the “divinity of Christ” and the assurance of our salvation. In 1905 Ellen says:

***“In Jesus is our life derived. In Him is life, that is original, unborrowed, underived life. In us there is a streamlet from the fountain of life. In Him is the fountain of life.** Our life is something that we receive, something that the Giver takes back again to Himself. If our life is hid with Christ in God, we shall, when Christ shall appear, also appear with Him in glory. And while in this world we will give to God, in sanctified service, all the capabilities He has given us.”--Letter 309, 1905. {MM 7.3}*

This same quote is repeated in 1914 with a couple of tiny changes:

***“From Jesus is our life derived. In him is life that is original,--unborrowed, underived life. In him is the fountain of life. In us there is a streamlet from the fountain of life.** Our life is something that we receive, something that the Giver takes back again to himself. If our life is hid with Christ in God, we shall, when Christ shall appear, also appear with him in glory. And while in this world, we shall give to God, in sanctified service, all the capabilities he has given us. . . .” {RH, August 6, 1914 par. 1}*

Thus we see that Christ is the “fountain of life” where man if connected to Him is a “streamlet of life” to others. This life is not “original” in us as it is not ours by nature, we borrow it for the good of others, and we derive it from His word. Christ on the other hand had this “inherently in Him” as He is the source of it. Trinitarians want to take these quotes and make the claim that Christ could not be “derived” from the Father but as we have seen these passages have nothing to do with His origin. They have everything to do with Him being the source of life and not simply a “streamlet”. Notice from Scripture:

*“For as the **Father has life in Himself**, so He has **given** the **Son to have life in***

Himself.” (John 5:26)

Human beings do not have “life in themselves” as we are not the source but Christ is. The “life” talked about above is that “original, unborrowed, underived life” which Christ inherited from His Father. In fact it is the Father’s life that is in Him because Christ came out of God.

“God has sent his Son to communicate **his own life** to humanity. Christ declares, “I live by the Father,” **my life and his being one.** (Ellen G. White, Home Missionary, 1st June 1897, ‘A call to the work’)

Here we see that Christ and God have the same life which makes sense because Jesus came out of Him. Below we see that Christ gives the Father’s life to sustain all created beings.

“But turning from all lesser representations, we behold God in Jesus. Looking unto Jesus we see that it is the glory of our God to give. “I do nothing of Myself,” said Christ; “the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father.” “I seek not Mine own glory,” but the glory of Him that sent Me. John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. In these words is set forth the great principle which is the law of life for the universe. **All things Christ received from God, but He took to give.** So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the **Father's life flows out to all;** through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the **great Source of all.** And thus **through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete,** representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life.” {DA 21.2}

In this issue of “In Christ is life; original, unborrowed, underived” the Trinitarian is reading the quote as if it says “Jesus is original, unborrowed, underived” but that’s not what it says nor does it make any sense to say Jesus is “unborrowed”. If we properly understand that in the Father is life “original, unborrowed, underived” and that at one time His Son had not yet been brought forth from Him we should be able to understand this quote in the proper sense. When the person Jesus came out of God did He have a different life “in Him” than what the Father had? No, He had the same “original, unborrowed, underived life” because “as the **Father has life in Himself,** so He has **given** the **Son to have life in Himself.**” Jesus then created angels and breathed His Spirit/life into them but they did not have life “original, unborrowed, underived” because they are continually dependent on Christ for the Father’s life. They are not a source for life like Christ is. Like humans, angels are a “streamlet of the fountain of life” where Christ is the “fountain of life”. This same concept concerning the life of Christ is seen in these scriptures:

“For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;” (Col 1:19)

What is this “fulness” that dwells in Jesus which the Father was pleased to “give Him”?

“For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” (Col 2:9)

Now why does “all the fullness of the Godhead” dwell in Him bodily?

*“Who is the **image of the invisible God**, the **firstborn** of every creature (of all creation):¹⁶ 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.¹⁷ And he is **before all things**, and by him all things consist.¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the **firstborn from the dead**; that in all things he might **have the preeminence**.¹⁹ For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;” (Col 1:15-19)*

Jesus is the “image of God” because He is the literal “firstborn of all creation”. Now Trinitarians will make the claim that He wasn’t literally the “firstborn from the dead” and therefore He is not literally the “firstborn of all creation”. It is true that Moses was raised from the dead before Christ was as well as some others on a temporal basis but those don’t count as Moses was the only one raised to “eternal life”. In the Old Testament we see accounts where the “second born” actually received the birthright such as Jacob. Firstborn status came with the position of preeminence and inheritance. The problem with the Trinitarian argument is they do not believe Jesus was “born” at all, not first, second, or any birth. There is no reason for Him to have “preeminence” of any type as He is really one of three God beings all having no origin. Why is the Father not the image of Jesus? Why is the Holy Spirit not said to be the image of the Father? These are questions that surround the “mystery” of the Trinity. Notice what the dedication of the firstborn in the Old Testament was a type of:

*“The dedication of the first-born had its origin in the earliest times. God had promised to give the **First-born of heaven** to save the sinner. This gift was to be acknowledged in every household by the consecration of the first-born son. He was to be devoted to the priesthood, as a representative of Christ among men.” {DA 51.1}*

The fact is Christ had preeminence in all things because He is the “firstborn of all creation”. He had all the “fullness of the Divine nature bodily” because He was begotten. It was His life that resurrected Moses so although Moses was “first in time” where Jesus was “second in time” Christ would have “firstborn from the dead” status because of His preeminence as “firstborn of all creation”. As we can see Christ truly has in Him life that is, original, unborrowed, underived because He is the source of life for all creation which continually borrow and derive life from Him. Christ doesn’t receive life like we do as it is inherent in Him. Below is a section I took out of a study I put together a few years ago with the aid of a brother. It shows who Ellen borrowed this famous quote from and what he believed:

“The term “In Him was life, original, unborrowed, underived” was borrowed from John Cumming, D.D., F.R.S.E. of London who originally penned these words in his *Sabbath Evening Readings on the New Testament* – St. John published by the John P. Jewett Co., Cleveland, OH in 1856. On page 5 Cumming writes:

“In him was life,’—that is, original, unborrowed, underived. In us there is a streamlet from the Fountain of Life; in him was the Fountain of Life. Our life is something we receive, something that the Giver takes back again to himself, —over which we have no control, and for which we must give God the account and the praise. But in Jesus was life underived, unborrowed;”

Bobby B: Cumming was a clergyman for the [Church of Scotland](#). The church of Scotland is a Presbyterian church that uses THE [WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH](#) as its doctrinal standard. The Westminster creed defines the Trinity by the following:

"In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son."

Bobby B: All, Presbyterians, in common with non-trinitarian SDA's (and classic Trinitarians for that matter) believed the Son [WAS DERIVED from the Father](#) because he is the only one who "is of none, neither begotten nor preceeding". Cumming believed the Son was "[eternally](#)" or [continually derived](#). Early SDA's believed the Son was derived from his Father by a mysterious one-time event. Modern SDA's believe that Father and Son have NO ontological relationship whatsoever."

We see here that the original author of "original, unborrowed, underived" is not Ellen White yet the truth of the words penned is inspired by the Holy Spirit even if the Spirit gave this truth years before Ellen penned it. We also see that the person who wrote this believed Jesus was "continually" going through the process of being begotten/derived as this is the traditional Catholic Trinity. This is the idea where Jesus is always coming out of God but never fully comes out as they are stuck in one substance. SDA non-trinitarians do not believe this as we believe Jesus fully came out of God in a onetime event. The interpretation of SDA Trinitarians today of what Ellen said would not work with the original author's understanding because both Ellen and Cummings have a totally different concept to this phrase than the SDA Trinitarians today.

The last thing in this study we have to go over and probably the most important is the issue of Christ's death. The Trinitarian definition to the words "eternal and self-existent" have forced them into a belief which doesn't allow Jesus to die. They back this up through the use of Ellen White but we first have to understand why they have to do this. Trinitarians believe Jesus is "without beginning/without end" and self-existent isn't simply having the nature of God to perpetuate one's own existence but rather being a person who's existence has always been and can never cease. In fact the cross is used by them to prove Jesus had no beginning, having no origin. In their belief the "person of God the Son" can never die. What died on Calvary was "human flesh". When that human flesh died the person "God the Son" was still alive in that dead body. When we say "person" we are talking about a conscious being just like the immortal soul doctrine. In the evangelical immortal soul doctrine when the human flesh of Jesus died Jesus as "God the Son" went on living consciously in an immortal soul separate from the body. The only difference between this and SDA Trinitarians is SDA's believe Jesus stayed with His body in the grave. Now the vast majority of SDA Trinitarians would have no clue about this unless they listened to some of the prominent leaders. Even listening to these guys they are very careful in

how they word this trying not to come out fully with the truth of their belief. It's generally spoken of in a way that makes it a "mystery" so the audience doesn't fully grasp what was just presented. Once in a while, more and more you will hear some flat out say "Jesus as God did not die, only as a human did He die". The first quote we will look at used by Trinitarians to make the claims they do is from 1898 which says:

*"I am the resurrection, and the life." He who had said, "I lay down my life, that I might take it again," came forth from the grave to life that was in himself. **Humanity died: divinity did not die.** In his divinity, Christ possessed the power to break the bonds of death. He declares that he has life in himself to quicken whom he will. {YI, August 4, 1898 par. 1}*

In the above quote, is this saying a "human person died, the divine person did not die"? The answer as we will see is no that is not what it is saying. In 1904 notice what was said:

*"Was the **human nature** of the Son of Mary changed into the **divine nature** of the Son of God? No; **the two natures** were mysteriously blended in **one person**--the Man Christ Jesus. In Him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. When Christ was crucified, it was **His human nature that died. Deity did not sink and die; that would have been impossible.**" {21MR 418.5} Letter 280a, 1904.*

Jesus was not two persons but rather one person made up of two natures. Understanding a little bit of cellular biology will help in grasping what is said above. It's actually really simple. Human nature and divine nature are different than a "human person or a divine person". Yes a human being is made of "human nature" or fleshly substance while a divine person is made of a "divine nature" or divine substance but they are not entirely the same. Jesus in the incarnation as a person had both a human substance and a divine substance. If a normal person has their head cut off, as a person they are instantly dead but on a cellular level it can takes minutes to hours for the "human nature to die". The person has no consciousness whatsoever as he is dead yet the cells of his body will die over a period of time. Likewise when Jesus died on the cross He as a person was dead having no consciousness whatsoever.

*"I am he that liveth, and **was dead**; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." (Rev 1:18)*

Within a few minutes to hours His human nature would have died completely but the divine substance would not die. When Jesus rose from the dead He came forth from the grave with the same divine nature He has always had. The problem with most people including non-trinitarians is they associate "nature" with a "conscious personality" and thus they struggle with these simple quotes. Jesus was a divine person and this divine person died yet His divine nature did not die. If you're struggling to grasp this just do a short study on cellular biology of how long it takes for human cells to die once a person dies. Then you will see the difference.

What happens if Trinitarians accept what I have shown above? They would have to admit that the divine person Jesus died which supposedly has “no beginning and no end” and must “always exist”. Once they admit that they have to accept non-trinitarian definitions to “eternal and self-existent” after which their entire platform would fall apart as these are the arguments to claim Jesus was not “begotten” in eternity. Non-trinitarians understand that Christ’s Deity is without beginning and His Divinity is what perpetuates His own existence yet as a person He had an origin. In His death that Divine nature still existed as it always had but it could not function as a “living person” because Jesus human hardware was dead.

*“Nature sympathized with the **suffering of its Author**. The heaving earth, the rent rocks, proclaimed that it was **the Son of God who died**.” (Ellen White, 2nd Vol. Testimonies page 211, ‘The sufferings of Christ’)*

Now there is a passage in scripture which Trinitarians use to make the claim that Jesus was alive because He resurrected Himself.

*“Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days **I will raise it up**.” (John 2:19)*

One would think if Jesus were going to raise Himself from the dead He must still be alive to do so as this would be a conscious decision. Now more than 20 times in scripture we see that God the Father raised Jesus from the dead but in the above we see that Jesus said “I will raise it up”. How can this harmonize?

*“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 10:18)*

In the above we see that Christ had “authority” to lay down His life and take/receive it up again and He received this commandment from His Father. When Christ created the earth it was because He received the commandment from His Father to do so and thus the Bible says God created everything through Jesus Christ. If Jesus said “in three days let there be a tree in your yard” guess what would happen in three days? There would be a tree in your yard even if He were dead in the grave at that time. What Christ “spoke” would take place exactly how and when He said it would. The point is even though Christ was dead He had already previously said “in three days I will raise it up” so it’s as good as done. He did not have to have consciousness to do anything. Now as for exactly how the power that raised Him was administered I do not know. Perhaps God spoke and this activated the divinity of Christ which woke Him up. In this concept it is Christ Deity/power that performed the miracle but it was God who activated it by speaking. This leads to the next point. What would have happened if Christ had sinned?

In the Non-trinitarian belief Christ would have died and ceased to exist, His Deity would have been lost. How exactly God would take back that Deity or destroy it, if that’s possible I do not know. Unfortunately Trinitarians believe that if Christ had sinned only His human nature would have died while He as God would have lived. Here is a quote from a popular Australian SDA leader who explains this:

*“Statements such as the above contradict the earlier statements of Ellen White offered by Robert Burness. Obviously, if Jesus failed in His mission then Heaven failed, God failed, Humanity was lost, the **human Jesus was lost**, and the Devil triumphed. But I **fail to see how One of the Members of the Trinity could be annihilated** – They all occupy the One Substance.” {Max Hatton, HAVE YOU HEARD THE LATEST FROM ANTI-TRINITARIANS}*

The fact is Max Hatton is perfectly in-line with Trinitarian theology because of their understanding of “eternal and self-existent”. Now let’s see what SOP says would happen to Jesus in the case of sin:

*“To the honor and glory of God, His beloved Son -- the Surety, the Substitute -- was delivered up and descended into the prisonhouse of the grave. The new tomb enclosed Him in its rocky chambers. **If one single sin had tainted His character the stone would never have been rolled away from the door of His rocky chamber, and the world with its burden of guilt would have perished.**” (Ellen G. White, Ms. 81, 1893, p. 11, Diary entry for Sunday, July 2, 1893, Wellington, New Zealand)*

*“Satan in heaven had hated Christ for His position in the courts of God. He hated Him the more when he himself was dethroned. He hated Him who pledged Himself to redeem a race of sinners. Yet into the world where Satan claimed dominion God permitted His Son to come, a helpless babe, subject to the weakness of humanity. He permitted Him to meet life's peril **in common with every human soul**, to fight the battle as every child of humanity must fight it, **at the risk of failure and eternal loss.**” (Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, Page 49, ‘Unto you a Saviour’)*

*Though Christ humbled Himself to become man, the Godhead was still His own. **His deity could not be lost while He stood faithful and true to His loyalty.** Surrounded with sorrow, suffering, and moral pollution, despised and rejected by the people to whom had been intrusted the oracles of heaven, Jesus could yet speak of Himself as the Son of man in heaven. He was ready to take once more His divine glory when His work on earth was done. {5BC 1129.3}*

*“Christ has found his pearl of great price in lost, perishing souls. **He sold all that he had to come into possession, even engaged to do the work, and run the risk of losing his own life in the conflict.** How then should man regard his fellow man? Christ has demonstrated the way. He says, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." (Ellen G. White, Letter 119, 1895)*

*“Could Satan in the least particular have tempted Christ to sin, he would have bruised the Saviour's head. As it was, he could only touch His heel. Had the head of Christ been touched, the hope of the human race would have perished. **Divine wrath would have come upon Christ as it came upon Adam. Christ and the church would have been without hope.**” (Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times, June 9th 1898, see also Selected Messages Book 1 page 256)*

*“Remember that Christ **risked all**: "tempted like as we are," **he staked even his own eternal existence upon the issue of the conflict.**” “Heaven itself was imperiled for our redemption. At the foot of the cross, remembering that for one sinner Jesus would have yielded up his life, **we may estimate the value of a soul.**” (Ellen G. White, General Conference Bulletin 1st December 1895 ‘Seeking the Lost’, Week of Prayer reading for Sabbath December 28th 1895)*

The truth is if Christ had failed in His mission every being would have been filled with doubt, which is sin. This would have been catastrophic to the entire universe as chaos would have broken out, and why “Heaven itself was imperiled for our redemption”. In the end all that would be left is God the Father. This was the Father’s risk in redeeming humanity, this was His sacrifice in giving up His only begotten Son. In the Trinity doctrine all that was risked was mere created beings as Jesus was never at risk, as this would be impossible. A three in one God can never be two in one because this simply means they were never three in one to begin with they were really just three gods. This belief destroys the love God by sending one of Himself to do a task where no risk was involved to the one being sent. There are so many reasons why it makes no sense in the Trinity doctrine to say “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten

Son.” God never had a Son to send in this doctrine to begin with and the one who drew the short straw was never at risk anyhow. He knew He wasn’t going to die because He is “eternal and self-existent”, that is, without beginning or end, having no origin and must always exist for God is a Trinity.

*“He that loveth not knoweth not God; for **God is love.**”⁹ In this was **manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.**¹⁰ Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” (1 John 4:8-10)*

In the above we see that the reason we know God is love is because He gave His only begotten Son for us. Trinitarians make the claim that in order for God to be love He could not exist alone. He must be more than one. This is called a philosophical argument and notice what scripture says about this:

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.” (Col 2:8)

This philosophical argument has a huge flaw in it that destroys the divinity of God. Notice the following:

“But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” (2 Pet 3:8)

The point above is to show us that time is irrelevant to God and this is the key factor in this Trinitarian argument. They picture God being alone for an infinite amount of time and thus He cannot be love because He has nobody to love. They believe He must have somebody to love in order to be love so in the Trinitarian case He loves Himself though Himself is really not Himself but rather another person but don’t forget these three persons are “He”. If you’re confused by that you should be because it’s why the woman of Revelation 17 has the name “Mystery” written on her forehead. The point is God is not subject to time like finite beings are, he cannot be bored, or get bored and He needs nothing. He simple is what He is which is love. His very divine nature is love and this nature is not subject to time but in the Trinitarian model the concept lowers God’s Deity down to a finite level making Him subject to time and if He is subject to time then

He must certainly have someone to love at all times. Since God is merciful does this mean sin must always have existed so that He could show mercy? No, the action of “loving” someone or bestowing “mercy” is simply the product of the nature God has when He chooses to express it.

Now in the Bible you will never find any inspiration that relates to the Trinitarian claim and as we seen from 1 John 4 we know God is love because He gave His only begotten Son. The God referred to in this chapter is specifically the Father. On top of this the argument by Trinitarians is completely speculative and here is what we are told:

“The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.” (Deut 29:29)

Ellen White expands on this by saying:

““The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever.” Deuteronomy 29:29. The revelation of Himself that God has given in His word is for our study. This we may seek to understand. But beyond this we are not to penetrate. The highest intellect may tax itself until it is wearied out in conjectures regarding the nature of God, but the effort will be fruitless. This problem has not been given us to solve. No human mind can comprehend God. None are to indulge in speculation regarding His nature. Here silence is eloquence. The Omniscient One is above discussion.” {MH 429.1}

The above quote is something the Trinitarians are in direct violation of. In closing I believe I have clearly shown from the inspired word what the concepts of “eternal and self-existent” are and that the Trinitarian arguments to make their case are based on speculation, human definitions, and philosophy. I’ve also shown how this leads to Jesus not dying for us nor was He at risk in coming to this earth. May God bless your studies!