

Does Ellen White Explain Matthew 28:19 as a Trinity?

by Jason | Oct 10, 2016

Matthew 28:19

...baptizing them in the name of the Father [a personal God,] and of the Son [a personal Prince and Saviour], and of the Holy Ghost [sent from heaven to represent Christ]...

Ellen White, *The Home Missionary*, July 1, 1897 par.16

Matthew 28:19 is a very popular scriptural passage used as evidence to support the doctrine of the Trinity. Looking at a paragraph from the book "The Home Missionary," this blog post will show that Ellen White understood Matthew 28:19 as non-trinitarian.

Please note that the parentheses in the quote below were not added but are from Ellen White's own pen:

Before he left them, Christ gave his followers a positive promise that after his ascension he would send them the Holy Spirit. "Go ye therefore," he said, "and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of **the Father [a personal God,]** and of **the Son [a personal Prince and Saviour]**, and of **the Holy Ghost [sent from heaven to represent Christ]**: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." {Ellen White, HM, July 1, 1897 par. 16}

The Father – A Personal God

Ellen White's first parenthesis defines the Father as a personal God. This definition repeats the same idea as expressed elsewhere in the writings of Ellen White. It also echos what the Bible writers expressed about the Father. If the Father is a personal God, then this personal God, of which there is only one in the Bible, is the Father:

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 Corinthians 8:6

Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers? Malachi 2:10

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. John 17:3 (This verse doesn't make sense if the only true God is a Trinity because Jesus is supposedly apart of the Trinity. This verse is showing that he is a separate being apart from the one true God)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: Ephesians 1:3

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Ephesians 3:14

One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. Ephesians 4:6

Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

1 Peter 1:2-3

Ellen White also believed and taught this Bible truth – that God is the Father, a personal God, a personal being:

Nature is not God, nor ever was God. God is in nature, the voice of nature testifies of God, but nature is not God. It only bears testimony to God's power as his created works. There is a personal God, the Father; there is a personal Christ, the Son. –U. T., July 3, 1898. {HL 287.1}

Through Jesus Christ a personal God created man and endowed him with intelligence and power. {CCh 74.4} As a personal being, God has revealed Himself in His Son. Jesus, the outshining of the Father's glory, "and the express image of His person" Hebrews 1:3, was on earth found in fashion as a man.{CCh 75.3}

God is the Father of Christ; Christ is the Son of God. To Christ has been given an exalted position. He has been made equal with the Father. All the counsels of God are opened to His Son. {CCh 76.5}

The current Seventh-day Adventist belief about God betrays the truth by defining God as a three-person being. Rather than exalting God as the Father, God has been defined as one being who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit:

"God is a relationship of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The only being worthy of our worship" <https://www.adventist.org/en/beliefs/god/trinity/>

This means that the church's current teaching about who God is disagrees with, defies, and denies what both the Bible and Ellen White teach about God.



The church leadership desires us to know God as a being that is a relationship of three personal gods. Ellen White, on the other hand, is beseeching us to know God as one personal God, the Father.

The Son – A Personal Prince and Saviour

In her second parenthesis, Ellen White defines the Son as “a personal Prince and Saviour.” Ellen White is communicating a distinction between “the Father, a personal God” and “the Son, a personal Prince and Saviour”. The Trinity doctrine errs in making the Father, Son and Holy Spirit the “one true God.” The SDA website declares that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is the “only being worthy of our worship.” In other words the Trinity doctrine is saying the “only being” is the “Father, Son and Holy Spirit.” This is apostasy. It is a departure from, and the desertion of, God’s revelation of Himself in the Bible and the foundation of the Seventh-day Adventist church.

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 Corinthians 8:6

Understanding Jesus to be the true Son of God does not take away from Christ’s divinity. Jesus is divine because He is the Son of God. The truth that Jesus is the Son of the living God is a truth that comes directly from the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. Matthew 16:16-17

May each one of us answer the following question: What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he?

The Pharisees had gathered close about Jesus as he answered the questions of the scribe. He now turned to them and put them a question: “What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he?” Jesus was evidently testing the

faith of the Pharisees in his divinity, whether they regarded him simply as a man, or the divine Son of God. Ellen White, 3SP p.55.2

The Lord Jesus Christ came first to the Jewish nation. They thought themselves perfect; they were filled with self-righteousness, regarding themselves as rich and increased in goods and in need of nothing in the way of spiritual knowledge. They thought they had no need of depending upon, and drawing from, the resources that Jesus opened before them. He presented to them the field containing the hidden treasure, but they turned from it. The bright and holy seraphim, the hosts of heaven, who wondered at the glorious plan of salvation, watched with intense interest to see how the people of God would receive the divine Son of God, clothed in the garb of humanity. The wisdom of God was in his only begotten Son. The tabernacle of God was with men. God was hidden in the habitation of humanity. {RH, April 3, 1894 par. 8}

The Holy Ghost – Sent From Heaven To Represent Christ

Ellen White's third parenthesis identifies the Holy Spirit as "sent from heaven to represent Christ." Ellen White provides clarity about who represents Christ in the following Desire of Ages quote:

The Holy Spirit is Christ's representative, but divested of the personality of humanity, and independent thereof. Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally. Therefore it was for their interest that He should go to the Father, and send the Spirit to be His successor on earth. No one could then have any advantage because of his location or his personal contact with Christ. By the Spirit the Saviour would be accessible to all. In this sense He would be nearer to them than if He had not ascended on high.– The Desire of Ages, p. 669.

1. **Who would be accessible to all?** Answer: Jesus.
2. **Who by the Spirit would be nearer to them than if Jesus had not ascended on high?** Answer: Jesus.

Here is another Ellen White quote that helps to identify "Christ's representative":

Wherever you go, carry on the good work of searching the Scriptures, and the Lord Jesus will always be at your right hand to help you. He is a merciful high priest pleading in your behalf. He will send his representative, the Holy Spirit; for He says, "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you." By the Spirit the Father and the Son will come and make their abode with you. There is no excuse for wavering or sinning. {Ellen White, BEcho, January 15, 1893 par. 8}

1. **Who will always be at your right hand to help you?** Jesus.
2. **Who will not leave you comfortless?** Jesus.
3. **Who will come to you?** Jesus.
4. **When you have the Spirit who will come and make their abode with you?** The Father and the Son.

The Bible is in complete harmony with what Ellen White has wrote as can be seen in the following verses:

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: John 15:26

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? Luke 11:13

And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Galatians 4:6

Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. 2 Corinthians 3:17

For through him {Jesus} we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Ephesians 2:18

The Holy Spirit is not another separate being apart from the Father and the Son. The Bible declares the Holy Spirit “proceedeth from the Father”. The Bible declares “the Lord is that Spirit”. This is the Holy Spirit that we can be partakers of.

The Father gave his Spirit without measure to his Son, and we also may partake of its fullness. Ellen White, Great Controversy p.477

By the Spirit the Father and the Son will come and make their abode with you. Ellen White, BEcho, January 15, 1893 par. 8

Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. John 14:23

The Lord is soon to come. We want that complete and perfect understanding which the Lord alone can give. It is not safe to catch the spirit from another. We want the Holy Spirit, which is Jesus Christ. If we commune with God, we shall have strength and grace and efficiency. Ellen White, Letter 66, 1894.18

Let us remember that the word Christ has commanded us to preach to all nations, kindreds, tongues, and peoples is confirmed by the Holy Spirit. This is God’s plan of work. Christ is the mighty power which confirms the word, bringing men and women, through conversion to the truth, to an understanding faith, making them willing to do whatsoever he has commanded them. The human agent, the seen instrument, is to preach the word, and the Lord Jesus, the unseen agency, by his Holy Spirit is to make the word efficacious and powerful. Ellen White, The Kress Collection p.126.4

7 Comments

Wilbur M. Hargreaves on May 7, 2019 at 8:49 pm

This is so very true and clear. I thank the most gracious Heavenly Father for this information He has revealed in both the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy Writings.

Kym Jones on May 11, 2019 at 12:04 am

I have not been a Trinitarian since somewhere between 1995-97 (I really don't remember exactly how long now.) Ellen White believed that if we had accepted the '1888 message', the Lord would have returned by 1900. Here is the interesting part – it was a non-Trinitarian message, given by men who were at that time decidedly non-Trinitarian. (Jones' kenotic theology, for instance, is referred to by Trinitarian scholars such as Louis Berkhof as 'shrunken deity'. Berkof's reinforcing this with Malachi 3:6 – 'I am the Lord, I do not change' demonstrates how Platonic philosophy has influenced Trinitarian theology.) So then, how can a Trinitarian church effectively call the world to come out of Babylon, when it has one foot in heaven, and the other Babylon? The answer is, it can't. And although the Song of Solomon provides the imagery (particularly in chapter 5) of the parlous state we are in, for the Groom came for His bride while she was sleeping, and then went away to tend to His 'garden' as she was not ready to receive Him (take from that what you will), the one encouraging thing about the message given to Laodicea is that in Rev. 19:7, we are told that 'the marriage supper of the Lamb is come, and His bride has (finally) made herself ready.' So although Laodicea *thinks* she is spiritually rich, and has been 'enriched' by the '1888' message, (the abundance of her material goods is evidence of this), she is in fact poor, blind, miserable, and above all else – naked. But the Lord does bless – I am Sabbath School superintendent in my own little country church & do what I can to teach truth, without being disfellowshipped. It's a difficult task as I have to walk a fine line. However, it seems that the Lord saw fit to have me teach the meaning of the 'Song of Solomon' today, so I taught it as I see it in relation to Revelation 3:20. Our little flock was blessed, and I doubt that anyone else in this particular Conference has the same understanding of this lesson in relation to Song of Solomon, the marriage supper of the Lamb, and Revelation 3:20.

Gideon on March 16, 2020 at 11:05 pm

May God bless this writings, they are true and from GOD and opened my heart.
Amen

G P on April 19, 2021 at 11:46 pm

So to confirm, the Holy Spirit is not a third person and it is the spirit of the Son and the Father?

Jason on April 20, 2021 at 6:17 pm

Hello,

I could NOT affirm that sentence. The Holy Spirit is the third person. Notice what the description of the third person is in the following quotes:

What saith our Saviour? "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father; and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." When trials overshadow the soul, remember the words of Christ, remember that He is an unseen presence in the person of the Holy Spirit, and He will be the peace and comfort given you, manifesting to you that He is with you, the Sun of Righteousness, chasing away your darkness. "If a man love me," Christ said, "he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Be of good cheer; light will come, and your soul will rejoice greatly in the Lord.—Letter 124, 1897. { DG 185.2}

Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church. A 671.2 – DA 671.2

<https://m.egwwritings.org/en/book/130.3304>

In summary I confirm:

- The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead
- Christ has given His Spirit
- Christ said He would not leave us comfortless
- Christ said He would come to us
- Christ said He will manifest Himself to us
- Christ is an unseen presence in the person of the Holy Spirit

I'm so grateful for His unseen presence. We are so in need of it in this dark world of sin. We truly are not alone. His promise is sure. He will not leave us comfortless. I would like to testify of His goodness and faithfulness. I need His presence and He has not disappointed.

GP on April 23, 2021 at 8:10 pm

Thank you. But just to confirm. You said, the Holy Spirit is not a separate being but then you said it's a third person?

Jason on April 24, 2021 at 11:47 am

Yes. The Holy Spirit is not a separate being but is the third person.

Many Seventh-day Adventist Trinitarians believe: "third PERSON of the Godhead" = "third BEING of the Godhead".

For those that affirm this thought process I would ask them to examine the following words:

The Spirit was given as a regenerating agency, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of man to this satanic captivity was amazing. Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the third person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fulness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given his Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress his own character upon the church. { RH May 19, 1904, par. 3 }

Note it says: "Sin could be resisted and overcome ONLY through the mighty agency...".

Question: Now who's Spirit is being talked about according to this passage?

Answer: "Christ has given his Spirit as a divine power".

Conclusion: Christ's Spirit is the third person of the Godhead. Would you affirm this conclusion?

Question: Does that harmonize with her other writings?

Answer: Yes, it does. For example:

Our German and Danish and Swedish brethren have no good reason for not being able to act in harmony in the publishing work. Those who believe the truth should remember that they are God's little children, that they are under His training. Let them be thankful to God for His manifold mercies and be kind to one another. They have one God and one Saviour; and one Spirit—the Spirit of Christ—is to bring unity into their ranks. { 9T 189.3 }

Question: Notice that this verse is referring to:

1. God
2. Saviour
3. Spirit

If I was to ask you to tell me WHO the Spirit is based on this reference what would be the correct answer?

Answer: "the Spirit of Christ"

The next reference reads:

"I am the way, the truth, and the life," Christ declares: "no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). Christ is invested with power to give life to all creatures. "As the living Father hath sent me," He says, "and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:57, 63). Christ is not here referring to His doctrine, but to His person, the divinity of His character.{ 1SM 249.3}

Question: When Christ talks about "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" who is he referring to?

Answer: "His person, the divinity of His character"

I hope this helps bring clarification to the topic. Thank you for your comment.