

Mark Finley — Is Jesus Eternal?

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There is a discussion in some circles regarding the *eternal nature** of Jesus. Some propose that since the King James Version of Scripture states that Christ was “begotten” of the Father, the “firstborn” of all creation, there was a time in the distant past when Jesus did not exist.** But what does the Bible teach regarding the *eternal nature* of Jesus? How does Scripture portray Christ? In this month’s lesson we will explore some of the Bible passages that clearly state that Jesus has existed from eternity***, that He never had a beginning****.

* **The Bible never does, but EGW uses the phrase “eternal nature” twice:**

1. “In regard to his mission and his kingdom. They supposed it was a temporal, earthly kingdom; but he showed them its spiritual and *eternal nature*” RH March 21, 1893, par. 3.
2. “O what a change would be brought about if all our workers in all our institutions would recognize the *eternal nature* of these principles and would weave them into life and character by implicit obedience to every command of God” Ms69-1907.2.

This point is brought up because of the difficult positions we find ourselves in when we use uninspired language to define who God and His Son are. This article is a case in point.

Could we look at the word “eternal” in the same way as Jude1:7 does?

Regarding Christ’s nature:

- **Genesis 1:26** - God said to His Son that they would **create man in Their image**, which equalled two (EW 145.1)
 - Genesis 5:2 calls both made in His image “Adam”
 - John 1:1 can be interchanged with Adam and Eve (In the beginning was Eve...)
 - Romans 1:18-20 - What may be known is **manifest IN us**, even His **eternal power and Godhead**
- **Genesis 2:7 - Adam**, representing the “**Father of all**”, was **first in existence** (The Father is the One as having no beginning—Psalm 90:1-2)
 - Both **Adam and Eve** were all the **fullness of humanity**, with the **spirit IN** all the fullness of humanity (God **breathed** into his nostrils, Christ **breathed** upon His disciples, John 20:22. See Job 27:3.)
- **Genesis 2:20-24 - Eve**, representing the **Son**, she was **brought forth** from the side of Adam (Proverbs 8:22-30, Daniel 2:45)
 - Eve was **from the man** (Genesis 2:22, John 7:29, 8:42, 16:27-30, 17:8)
 - Eve was “made” **from the substance** of Adam (Genesis 2:22, Philippians 2:5-7, EGW said “of one substance” ST November 27, 1893, par. 5)
 - Eve was the **glory of the man** (1 Corinthians 11:7, John 17:5)
 - Adam declared Eve as **equal**, ‘bone of my bones, flesh of my flesh’ (Genesis 2:23, John 5:18, 10:30)
 - Eve was a **help meet (fit)** for Adam (Genesis 2:20, Zechariah 6:13)
 - Adam **gave her a name** (Genesis 2:23, Hebrews 1:4-8)
 - Adam, as most men are, was **taller** (John 14:28)
 - Adam and Eve were of “**one**” (Genesis 2:24, John 10:30)

- Adam and Eve were both **clothed with light** (Genesis 2:25, John 1:4-5, 9:5, 1 John 1:5)

** Skim the Bible study entitled “God the Father” below on page 6. If there were ANY references to the Father and the Son being titles that were an illustration, analogy, metaphor, or symbol, I would be more inclined to listen to this idea. But we have clear wording from the Bible that gives us a Father and Son relationship. One question, How could the Father be as young as the Son, and how could the Son be as old as the Father?

*** “From eternity” or “from everlasting” is correct, yet it is not the same meaning as “through” or “throughout” everlasting or eternity. You’ll notice the latter phrases are ALWAYS used in the future tense by EGW. This is telling, as FROM eternity is where Christ came from.

**** We do not have any inspired phrases that say what is said here, “He never had a beginning.” If we had inspiration to say this, the game would be over. But this is not what was meant by the Bible or EGW.

As a side note, we can find that EGW endorsed the thoughts of Christ being begotten in the messages of the sermon presented at the Minneapolis General Conference entitled, “Christ and His Righteousness” by Ellet Waggoner, and the original book published entitled, “Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation” by Uriah Smith.

1 What expression did Jesus use in John 8:58 to describe His *eternal nature*?* What was the reaction of Jewish leaders to Christ’s statement? Jesus clearly and powerfully declared His *eternal nature* by declaring Himself the “I AM.” This expression is equivalent to Jesus saying, “I am the Eternal One.”** Jewish leaders understood exactly what Jesus meant and attempted to stone Him.*** They understood the implications of His statement in light of Exodus 3:14, in which God declares Himself the “I AM.” If both Father and Son are the “I AM,” then both are eternal.****

* Jesus had said earlier in John 5:17-18 that He was **the Son** of God, for which the Jews sought the more to kill Him.

** If we use words and phrases that are consistent with inspiration, we stay further out of trouble (or get more into it?). There are no returns for a query of the phrase, “I am the Eternal One.”

*** Jesus was not ignorant of the fact that a question asked Him by the high priest was designed to end His life. His honest answer would bring Him to death and He knew it, yet He answered boldly and clearly. “The high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, **the Son** of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am...” (Mark 14:61-62).

**** Yes, they are both eternal, but do Christians have a beginning to their eternal life? Could they say that the Father has given us life through His Son? Could the Son then say that He was given eternal life through His Father?

Doesn’t the Bible say that the head of the man is Christ? Why? Because He was first?

Doesn’t the Bible say that the head of the woman is the man? Why? Because He was first?

Doesn't the Bible say that the head of Christ is God? Why? Because He was first?
(See 1 Corinthians 11:3 and John 14:28 which shows the Father as greater than the Son. How?)

2 Read Isaiah 9:6 and list the titles of Jesus.* It may seem strange to some that Jesus is called “Everlasting Father” when they are two separate, distinct beings.** The answer lies in the fact that they are one in character and eternal in existence. That’s what Jesus meant when He answered Phillip’s query, “Show us the Father,” by responding, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” (John 14:9).

* Jesus is the Father of everything He created—and since being brought forth from the Father and given life (John 3:16), He is eternal—He has eternal life, a gift from His Father (John 5:26).

** We are told that, “They were two, yet little short of being identical; two in individuality, yet one in spirit, and heart, and character.” YI December 16, 1897, par. 5

3 How did the prophet Micah describe Christ’s eternal nature? Read Micah 5:2. Micah’s statement harmonizes well with Ellen White’s comment: “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. ‘He that believeth in me,’ said Jesus, ‘though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.’ ”* In this remarkably clear statement* Ellen White links Christ’s eternal nature with His ability to provide salvation. In other words, if He is not eternal, can He provide eternal life? Obviously not.**

* This quote from DA 530.3 is only a portion of the original letter written only one year earlier by EGW. Please notice, “‘In him was life; and the life was the light of men’”. 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 lifegiver, **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**”, 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”. **This is the open fountain of life** for the world.” ST April 8, 1897, par. 2

Unborrowed refers to the fact that the Father gave it to Him to keep as His, so long as He didn’t lose it through disobedience. Question: Could Jesus have lost this “unborrowed” life?

** John 5:26 makes it clear how Jesus Christ has this life “As the Father hath life in himself; so hath he **given** to the Son to have life in himself.”

4 Compare Philippians 2:4-7* with Hebrews 1:2-4,** 8, 9.*** What do these verses tell us about the relationship of the Father and the Son? How do they describe Jesus? The apostle Paul declares that Jesus was in the very “form” of God. The Greek word for form is morphe, which means the very essence**** of God. That’s why it was not “robbery” for Jesus to be “equal”

with God. Robbery is stealing something that is not rightfully yours. Since Jesus was the “brightness of [the Father’s] glory” and the “express image of His person,” He can rightfully claim equality with God.*****

* Did you notice the word “form”? Jesus Christ was in the “form” of God, just as He was in the “form” of a servant. Born into one but not into the other? Or was He born into both as the Bible so often says?

** Why would someone leave out such amazing verses as 5-6 in such a setting? Here they are for our consideration, “For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art **my Son**, this day have I **begotten** thee? And again, I will be to him a **Father**, and he shall be to me a **Son**? And again, when he bringeth in the **firstbegotten into** the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him” (Hebrews 1:5-6).

*** **Jesus was called God** by the Father, and rightly so, but the Father never has called the Son, “My God.” Jesus, on the other hand, said that seven times regarding His Father. Notice:

- Matthew 27:46 “**My God, my God**, why hast thou forsaken me?”
- John 20:17 “I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to **my God**, and your God.”
- Revelation 3:12 “Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of **my God**, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of **my God**, and the name of the city of **my God**, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from **my God**: and I will write upon him my new name.”

**** “An adjustment of parts... shape...” is what I read in Strong’s Concordance. In fact, Mark 16:12 shows us how Mark understood the word while he used it regarding Christ on the road to Emmaus, “After that he appeared in another **form** unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country.”

***** The only reason Christ could claim equality with His Father is as follows: “God **is** the Father of Christ; Christ **is** the Son of God. To Christ has been **given** an exalted position. He has been **made equal** with the Father. All the counsels of God are opened to His Son.” 8T 268.3 So... if Christ was always in an exalted position, why these words? They would seem unnecessary and confusing.

Also, if Christ was always equal with the Father, why these words? They would see unnecessary and confusing. Notice, too, this passage in 8T begins with Hebrews 1:1-5.

5 How did John the revelator describe Jesus? What expressions did He use to portray Christ’s **eternal nature**? Read Revelation 1:8. John used the expression “the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End” to describe Christ. In this same verse Jesus is described as the one “who is and who was and who is to come.” In verse 4 the Father is described as He “who is and who was and who is to come.” The Father and Son both existed from eternity.*

* Anyone who has a red-letter edition of the Bible, might see one of the following:

- I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

- I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.
- I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

The one thing we need to understand right from the start is, the **red letters are not inspired**. These are what scholars and editors believe Jesus to have said. Some areas are clear-cut with no debate; others are up for interpretation, with as many different ideas as there are those who present them. That said, which one is the correct one, in terms of our understanding the verse correctly? My opinion is, the third one—Jesus is speaking the entire time.

So, what is being said in this verse? Is Jesus making a declaration He is the Almighty? Absolutely not! What Jesus is saying in the verse is, He is indeed Alpha and Omega, and yet, He's saying it's His Father (whom He is quoting), the eternal one, who has made this declaration. In other words, the verse should be understood, as follows: I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, says my Father, who is, and who was, and who is to come—the Almighty.

This understanding fits in nicely with similar passages in Revelation 1:4 and 4:8: “John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;” “And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.”

Both passages clearly refer to the Father. It's clear in Revelation 1:4, because in verse five, John builds upon verse four and differentiates by introducing the conjunction, “and”, followed by the prepositional phrase, “from Jesus Christ.” A basic understanding of English (and this is meted out in the Greek, too) shows the one “which is, and which was, and which is to come,” before whose throne are the seven spirits, cannot be the very next individual to whom John refers, and that is Jesus. To conclude Jesus is the one to whom John referred in verse four not only would be an illogical error of great pity, but even more so an egregious error of self-deception.

Revelation 4:8 clearly refers to the Father, because the entire chapter is the preparation for the inauguration of the Lamb—Jesus—who doesn't appear until Chapter 5. Again, to remotely believe the passage of 4:8 refers to Jesus demonstrates a pathetic lack of analysis, as well as an abuse of the Scripture. Therefore, in Revelation 1:8, Jesus is essentially quoting what the Father had said about His Son; in turn, Jesus is telling John. (Response to answer 5 quoted from an article by Phillip Triebkorn, “[Is Jesus Almighty God?](#)”)

6 In the book of Hebrews, Melchizedek, high priest of Salem, is compared to Jesus. What insights about Christ do we get from this comparison? Read Hebrews 7:1-3.* According to this passage, Jesus, like Melchizedek, has no beginning or ending.** The overwhelming evidence of

Scripture is that Jesus is the divine, eternal **Son** of God. We can rejoice that One equal with the Father, One with the Father and One linked by an inestimable bond of love with the Father, is the Jesus who lived, died, rose from the dead, and ministers as our high priest in heaven.

* [Please visit this site for an answer I've given in notes and video to this question.](#)

** If Christ has no beginning nor ending, then do we have only a human sacrifice that partly died on the cross? If the sacrifice was of One who was “a little lower than the angels,” why couldn’t an angel die in our place? Please read SR 43.2, “The **angels** prostrated themselves before Him. They offered **their lives**. Jesus said to them that He would by His death save many, that the life of an **angel could not pay the debt**. His life **alone** could be accepted of His Father as a ransom for man.”

**God the Father

God the Father

John 6:27 Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath **God the Father** sealed.

1 Corinthians 8:6 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.

Galatians 1:1 Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and **God the Father**, who raised him from the dead;)

Galatians 1:3 Grace be to you and peace from **God the Father**, and from our Lord Jesus Christ,

Ephesians 6:23 Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from **God the Father** and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Philippians 2:11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of **God the Father**.

1 Thessalonians 1:1 Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in **God the Father** and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Timothy 1:2 To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from **God the Father** and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Titus 1:4 To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from **God the Father** and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.

1 Peter 1:2 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.

2 Peter 1:17 For he received from **God the Father** honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

2 John 3 Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from **God the Father**, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

Jude 1 Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by **God the Father**, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called.

Father of our Lord

Romans 15:6 That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the **Father of our Lord** Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 1:3 Blessed be God, even the **Father of our Lord** Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort.

2 Corinthians 11:31 The God and **Father of our Lord** Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not.

Ephesians 1:3 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 3:14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the **Father of our Lord** Jesus Christ.

Colossians 1:3 We give thanks to God and the **Father of our Lord** Jesus Christ, praying always for you.

1 Peter 1:3 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.

My Beloved Son

Matthew 3:17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is **my beloved Son**, in whom I am well pleased.

Matthew 17:5 While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is **my beloved Son**, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

Mark 1:11 And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art **my beloved Son**, in whom I am well pleased.

Mark 9:7 And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is **my beloved Son**: hear him.

Luke 3:22 And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art **my beloved Son**; in thee I am well pleased.

Luke 9:35 And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is **my beloved Son**: hear him.

2 Peter 1:17 For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is **my beloved Son**, in whom I am well pleased.

One God

Malachi 2:10 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?

Mark 12:32 And the scribe said unto him [Christ], Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is **one God**; and there is none other but he.

Romans 3:30 Seeing it is **one God**, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.

1 Corinthians 8:6 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.

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

1 Timothy 2:5 For there is **one God**, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

James 2:19 Thou believest that there is **one God**; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

True God

2 Chronicles 15:3 Now for a long season Israel hath been without the **true God**, and without a teaching priest, and without law.

Jeremiah 10:10 But the LORD is the **true God**, he is the living God, and an everlasting king: at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation.

John 17:3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only **true God**, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

1 Thessalonians 1:9 For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and **true God**.

1 John 5:20 And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the **true God**, and eternal life.