

# Divine Wisdom

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Proverbs 8: 22.



"The Lord possessed me  
at the beginning of His way,  
Before His works of old."  
Proverbs 8: 22



# I. Introduction

The absolute realities  
are disappearing:  
circumstantial ethics,  
Relative truth,  
'one-day-at-a-time'  
wisdom.

What are our  
benchmarks?





“If you say there is no such thing as morality in absolute terms, then child abuse is not evil, it just may not happen to be your thing.”

Rebecca Manley Pippert



The modern habit of saying "Every man has a different philosophy; this is my philosophy and it suits me" – the habit of saying this is mere weak-mindedness. A cosmic philosophy is not constructed to fit a man; a cosmic philosophy is constructed to fit a cosmos. A man can no more possess a private religion than he can possess a private sun and moon."

G.K. Chesterton



"I do not have it in for relativism. In many respects I find it a fascinating, even attractive, alternative. It engenders epistemological humility, defeats an arrogant pomposity in belief, even promotes a sort of democratic ideal in matters of knowledge. Perhaps its most comforting feature is that it requires no hard work at all in the matter of justifying beliefs."

David L. Wolfe, *Epistemology: The Justification Of Belief*





“Relativism poses as humble by saying: “We are not smart enough to know what the truth is—or if there is any universal truth.” It sounds humble. But look carefully at what is happening. It’s like a servant saying: I am not smart enough to know which person here is my master—or if I even have a master. The result is that I don’t have a master and I can be my own master. That is in reality what happens to relativists: In claiming to be too lowly to know the truth, they exalt themselves as supreme arbiter of what they can think and do. This is not humility. This is the essence of pride.”

*John Piper, Think: The Life of the Mind and the Love of God*



"I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."

C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity



# II. Context



# Book of Proverbs – Parallelism between chapter 2, 3 and 6, 7, and 8

## Chapter 2

<b>A</b>	2: 1 - 9	God and wisdom
<b>B</b>	2: 10 - 22	The wisdom delivers from the immoral woman
<b>C</b>	3: 1 - 10	The law in the heart

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## Chapter 8

<b>C'</b>	6: 20 - 35	The law in the heart
<b>B'</b>	7: 1 - 27	The wisdom delivers from the immoral woman
<b>A'</b>	8: 1 - 36	God and wisdom

## Book of Proverbs - Structure of the chapter 8:1 – 36.

1<sup>st</sup> stanza 8: 1 - 11

Excellent Things and right things,  
TRUTH AND JUSTICE

“Listen, for I will speak of excellent things,  
And from the opening of my lips  
will come right things;" (v. 6)

For my mouth will speak truth;  
All the words of my mouth are with righteousness; (v. 8)



## Book of Proverbs - Structure of the chapter 8:1 – 36.

2<sup>nd</sup> stanza 8: 12 - 21

**Those who seek me, find me**

WISDOM'S  
PREFERENCES

1

The company of wisdom (8:12)

2

What wisdom cannot accept (8: 13)

3

Wisdom and strength (8: 14)

WISDOM AND LEADERSHIP

4

Wisdom and governance (8: 15 – 16)

HOW TO FIND WISDOM?

5

Wisdom and wise men (8: 17)

6

Wisdom and riches (8: 18 – 19)

WISDOM AND PROSPERITY

7

Wisdom and righteousness (8: 20 – 21)

## Book of Proverbs - Structure of the chapter 8:1 – 36.

4<sup>th</sup> stanza 8: 32 - 36

### **Those who find me, find life**

- 1 Blessed are those who keep my ways (8: 32)
- 2 Listen and be wise (SHEMA ISRAEL) (8: 33)
- 3 Watching and waiting daily for wisdom (8: 34)
- 4 Favor from the Lord, LIFE (8: 35)
- 5 Refusing wisdom, DEATH (8: 36)

# III. The Poem about the Eternal Origins of the Wisdom





## Book of Proverbs - Structure of the chapter 8:1 – 36.

3<sup>rd</sup> stanza 8: 22 - 31

### THE ETERNAL

**A**

Wisdom with YAHWE (8: 22)

**B**

Wisdom before the Creation (8: 23)

**C**

WHEN...

Before the time of CREATION (8: 24 – 29);  
*Before depth and water (24); mountains (25);*  
*Before the earth (26); the heavens (27);*  
*Before clouds, wells, seas, foundations (28-29)*

**A'**

Delight of wisdom with YAHWE (8: 30)

**B'**

Delight of wisdom with the Creation (8: 31)

“Wisdom is described as if it were a person, and its origin is located in God Himself: “The Lord brought me forth as the first of his works” (verse 22). The verb translated “to bring forth” can be rendered in English “he acquired/conceived/created me.” The basic meaning of the Hebrew verb *qanah* seems to be “to possess” (Prov. 4:5-7). One can acquire or possess something in different ways. One of them is through begetting (Gen. 4:1). In Proverbs the context seems to suggest the idea of conception. The phrase “as the first of his works” can be translated “in the beginning of his way”; when God began to create, wisdom was already there.”  
Angel Rodriguez, Biblical Research Institute, 2002.



## II. Divinity of the Wisdom (Jesus Christ)

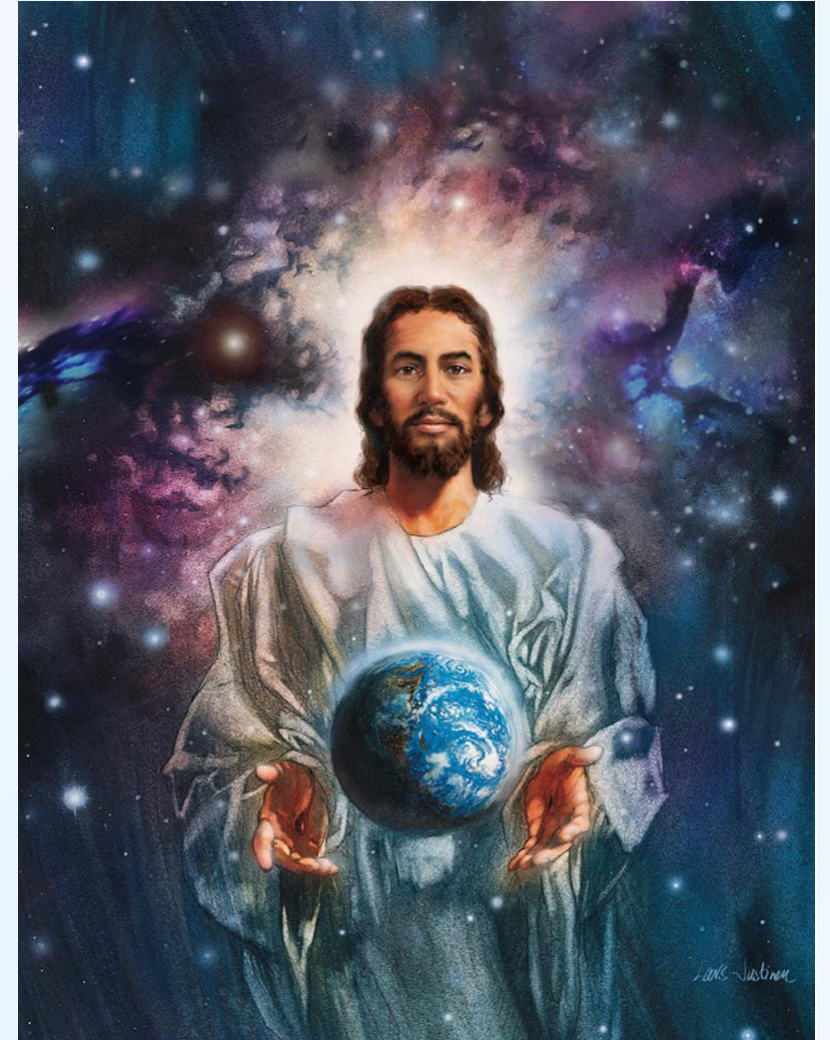




If the wisdom [Jesus Christ] were “the beginning of the ways” of God, then it should be understood that God did nothing without Him.

Also God had no actions before the beginning of His ways, and the beginning of God’s ways was with wisdom [Jesus Christ].

As it is impossible to imagine a perfect, omniscient God working without wisdom, we can conclude that the poem about the eternal origins of the wisdom is not promoting any chronological anteriority of God compared to Jesus Christ.



## Difficulty for us to conceive the notion of "before time eternal"

"How, then, shall I respond to him who asks, "What was God doing before he made heaven and earth?"... More willingly would I have answered, "I do not know what I do not know..."

Rather, I say that you, our God, is the Creator of every creature. And if in the term "heaven and earth" every creature is included, I make bold to say further: "Before God made heaven and earth, he did not make anything at all..."

What, then, is time? If no one asks me, I know what it is. If I wish to explain it to him who asks me, I do not know. Yet I say with confidence that I know that if nothing passed away, there would be no past time; and if nothing were still coming, there would be no future time; and if there were nothing at all, there would be no present time..."

Augustine, Confessions, chapter 14 – 15.

We can continue to affirm the monotheistic faith in one God and to believe in the Triune God as Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit only if the divinity of the three persons is not quintessentially, ontologically different.

Therefore, supporting the Arianistic concept of Jesus Christ, as the Son of God who was born sometimes in the past, disqualifies us of believing in One God, but in two. For those who accept that it was a time when Jesus didn't exist, they are by nature two totally different Gods: a totally eternal God and a born or created God, limited in time.





“My brethren, if Jesus Christ be not very God of very God, I would never preach the gospel of Christ again: for it would not be gospel; it would be only a system of moral ethics; Seneca, Cicero, or any of the Gentile philosophers, would be as good a Saviour as Jesus of Nazareth. It is the divinity of our Lord that gives a sanction to his death, and makes him such a high priest as became us, one who, by the infinite merits of his suffering, could make a full, perfect, sufficient sacrifice, satisfaction, and oblation, to infinitely offended justice...

... Many will think these hard sayings: but I think it no breach of charity to affirm, that an Arian or Socinian cannot be a Christian. The one would make us believe Jesus Christ is only a created God, which is a self-contradiction: and the other would have us look on him only as a good man; and instead of owning his death to be an atonement for the sins of the world, would persuade us, that Christ died only to seal the truth of his doctrine with his blood. But if Jesus Christ be no more than a mere man, if he be not truly God, he was the vilest sinner that ever appeared in the world: for he accepted of divine adoration from the man who had been born blind, as we read in John 9: 38... And now, why should it be thought a breach of charity, to affirm that those who deny the divinity of Jesus Christ in the strictest sense of the word, cannot be Christians? For they are greater infidels than the devils themselves, who confessed that they knew who he was, "even the holy one of God".

George Whitefield, 1714 – 1770, English Anglican priest, contributing to the revival and the foundation of the Methodist Church.

"[God speaks in the plural 'Let us make man in our image'] because already there was attached to Him his Son, a second person, his own Word, and a third, the Spirit in the Word....one substance in three coherent persons. He was at once the Father, the Son, and the Spirit."

Tertullian, [(160 – 220 A.D.), way before the Council of Nicea)]. Against Praxeas, ch. 12.



## 2. The names given to Jesus are the proofs of His divinity

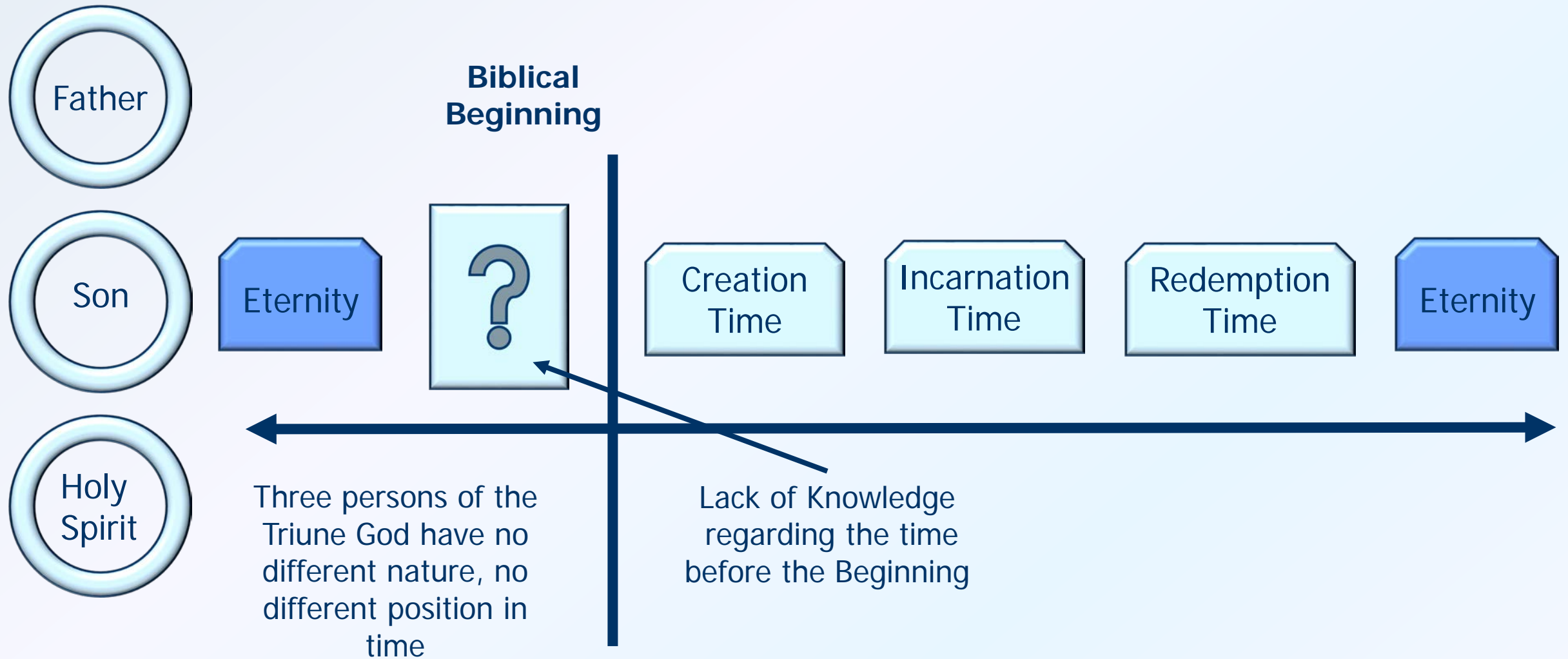
1	Everlasting Father	Isaiah 9: 6.
2	Holy One	Acts 3: 14.
3	Emmanuel, God with us	Matthew 1: 23.
4	King of kings and Lord of lords	Revelation 19: 16.
5	Great God	Titus 2: 13.
6	I am	John 8: 58.
7	The First and the Last	Revelation 1: 17.
8	God	John 1: 1 – 3.
9	King of Glory	Psalms 24: 8 – 10.
10	Lord of All	Acts 10: 36.



If our heavenly Father is an “everlasting Father”, and if His son Jesus Christ receives the same name, it is impossible to attach a different notion of everlasting to one, without applying it also to the second. Therefore, Jesus Christ is everlasting, from the same nature of eternity as His Father.



# Pre-existence of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit



“Still seeking to give a true direction to her [Martha] 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. “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. Believest thou this?” Christ here looks forward to the time of His second coming. Then the righteous dead shall be raised incorruptible, and the living righteous shall be translated to heaven without seeing death. The miracle which Christ was about to perform, in raising Lazarus from the dead, would represent the resurrection of all the righteous dead. By His word and His works He declared Himself the Author of the resurrection. He who Himself was soon to die upon the cross stood with the keys of death, a conqueror of the grave, and asserted His right and power to give eternal life. Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 530.



"I praise you for all things, I  
bless you, I glorify you, along  
with the everlasting and  
heavenly Jesus Christ, your  
beloved Son, with whom, to  
you and the Holy Spirit, be  
glory both now and to all  
coming ages. Amen"

Polycarp of Smyrna, 150 A.D.

In "Martyrdom of Polycarp,  
p. 14.





## Parallels between Proverbs 8 and Isaiah 40

### Parallels between WISDOM and YAHWE

#### Isaiah 40: 12 – 14.

“Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, measured heaven with a span and calculated the dust (APHAR) of the earth in measure?

Who has directed the Spirit of YAHWE,  
Or as His counselor (ETSAH) has taught Him?  
With whom did He take counsel,  
and who instructed Him,  
And taught Him in the path of justice?  
Who taught Him knowledge (DAATH),  
And showed Him the way of understanding (TABUWN)?

#### Proverbs 8

“While as yet He had not made the earth or the fields, or the primal dust (APHAR) of the world.

I, WISDOM, dwell with prudence,  
And find out knowledge (DAATH)  
and discretion... (8: 12)  
Counsel (ETSAH) is mine, and sound wisdom;  
(8: 14)

I am understanding, I have strength.  
Does not wisdom cry out,  
And understanding (TABUWN) lift up her voice?

Proverbs 8: 12 – 14.

“With regard to Wisdom in the book of Proverbs (especially Proverbs 8: 12 – 36), I have become convinced by those modern studies that identify HOKMA (“Wisdom”) as an hypostatization for divinity (in the sense of an actual divine person). Especially impressive is the evidence that Wisdom in Proverbs assumes the very prerogatives elsewhere reserved for Yahweh alone in the Hebrew Bible: 1. giver of life and death (Proverbs 8: 35 – 36); 2. source of legitimate government (8: 15 – 16); 3. the One who is to be sought after, found, and called (8: 17); 4. the one who loves and is to be loved (8: 17); 5. the giver of wealth (8: 18 – 21); 6. the giver of security (1: 33); 7. and perhaps most significantly, a source of revelation (Proverbs 8: 6 – 10. 19. 32. 34; 30: 3 – 5).”

Richard M. Davidson, Proverbs 8: and the Place of Christ in the Trinity, Journal of the Adventist Theological Society, 17/1, Spring 2006. p. 33 – 54.

## Section 7. Proofs of the eternal Deity of the Son.

“Before proceeding farther, it will be necessary to prove the divinity of the Son and the Holy Spirit. Thereafter, we shall see how they differ from each other. When the Word of God is set before us in the Scriptures, it were certainly most absurd to imagine that it is only a fleeting and evanescent voice, which is sent out into the air, and comes forth beyond God himself, as was the case with the communications made to the patriarchs, and all the prophecies. The reference is rather to the wisdom ever dwelling with God, and by which all oracles and prophecies were inspired. For, as Peter testifies, ([1Pe 1: 11](#)) the ancient prophets spake by the Spirit of Christ just as did the apostles, and all who after them were ministers of the heavenly doctrine. But as Christ was not yet manifested, we necessarily understand that the Word was begotten of the Father before all ages...

... But if that Spirit, whose organs the prophets were, belonged to the Word, the inference is irresistible, that the Word was truly God. And this is clearly enough shown by Moses in his account of the creation, where he places the Word as intermediate. For why does he distinctly narrate that God, in creating each of his works, said, Let there be this - let there be that, unless that the unsearchable glory of God might shine forth in his image? I know prattlers would easily evade this, by saying that Word is used for order or command; but the apostles are better expositors, when they tell us that the worlds were created by the Son, and that he sustains all things by his mighty word, ([Heb. 1: 2](#)) For we here see that "word" is used for the nod or command of the Son, who is himself the eternal and essential Word of the Father. And no man of sane mind can have any doubt as to Solomon's meaning, when he introduces Wisdom as begotten by God, and presiding at the creation of the world, and all other divine operations, ([Pro 8: 22](#))...



... For it were trifling and foolish to imagine any temporary command at a time when God was pleased to execute his fixed and eternal counsel, and something more still mysterious. To this our Saviour's words refer, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," ([John 5: 17](#)) In thus affirming, that from the foundation of the world he constantly worked with the Father, he gives a clearer explanation of what Moses simply touched... Therefore, as all revelations from heaven are duly designated by the title of the Word of God, so the highest place must be assigned to that substantial Word, the source of all inspiration, which, as being liable to no variation, remains for ever one and the same with God, and is God."

Calvin's Institute of the Christian Religion

Book 1, Chapter 13: The unity of the Divine Essence in three Persons taught, in Scripture, from the foundation of the world.

„But divine love had conceived a plan whereby man might be redeemed. The broken law of God demanded the life of the sinner. In all the universe there was but one who could, in behalf of man, satisfy its claims. Since the divine law is as sacred as God Himself, only one equal with God could make atonement for its transgression.“

Ellen G. White, Christ in His Sanctuary, p. 19.

# V. Conclusion





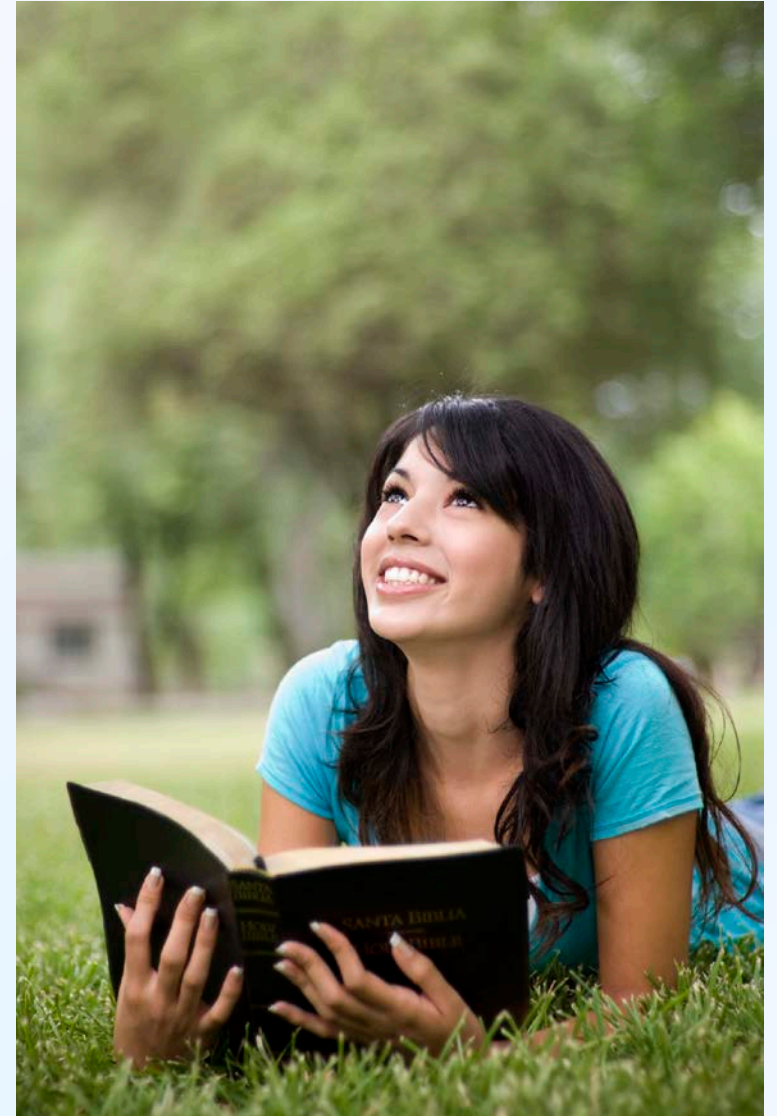
"The Revelation of God is not a book or a doctrine, but a living Person."  
Emile Brunner



"Since God is infinite and wise, He must be infinitely wise: This is called omnisapience. So as applied to God, wisdom refers to His unerring ability to choose the best means to accomplish the best ends. As such, God wisdom is written in several other attributes: His omniscience provides the knowledge for His wise choices; His omnibenevolence assures that they will be good choices; and His omnipotence enables Him to achieve His ends by the means He chooses." – Dr. Norman Geisler, Systematic Theology, p. 211.



“The only true wisdom is to know that you know nothing and that God knows everything. Staying close to Him, to the source of eternal wisdom, is the key to living a fulfilled existence of joy, peace, love, and happiness.”  
(DS)



"I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."

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