

*"Watchman,  
what of the night?"*

*"The hour has come, the hour is striking and striking at you,  
the hour and the end!"* Eze. 7:6 (Moffatt)



## **The Doctrine of the Incarnation As Understood by Jones & Waggoner**

Page 2

**The Papal Objective for 2005**

Page 7

### *Editor's Preface*

The edited and revised 4th chapter of *An Interpretive History of the Doctrine of the Incarnation as Taught by the Seventh-day Adventist Church* was of such a length that it was impossible to complete it in this issue of WWN. We will conclude it in the March issue. However, a development in the plans of Papal Rome for this liturgical year dedicated to the Eucharist calls for special attention; therefore, in the March issue we shall give careful study to the chapter in the book of Revelation which portrays "the false prophet" under the symbol of the "lamb-like beast" that came up out of the "earth."

In considering the position taken by Jones and Waggoner certain historical data needs to be kept in mind. The period of time includes the last decade of the 19th century, and the first five years of the new century. In 1892, Waggoner accepted assignment to England, and with Ellen G. White in Australia, this left Jones the sole voice of the message which they presented in 1888. Waggoner did attend the 1901 GC Session and spoke on the subject of the Incarnation the night before Ellen White gave her testimony the following morning which ended the Holy Flesh Movement. Jones remained in the States and in 1897 was made editor-in-chief of the *Review & Herald*. His series of editorials on the subject of the Incarnation in 1900 incited R. S. Donnell, president of the Indiana Conference and titular head of the Holy Flesh Movement, to respond in the Indiana Conference paper, the *Indiana Reporter*. The cap sheaf to the position held by Jones was the publication of his book in 1905 by the Pacific Press, *The Consecrated Way to Christian Perfection*.

An interpretive history of the doctrine of the Incarnation as taught by the Seventh-day Adventist Church - 4

## IV

### The Doctrine of the Incarnation As Understood by A. T. Jones & E. J. Waggoner

During the period of time covered in this chapter - 1888 to 1905 - the subject of the Incarnation was preached more extensively, and discussed more fully than at any other time in the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church with the exception of the last three decades. To understand the why of this emphasis during this period of time, it is necessary to note the messages of righteousness by faith which came to the Church at the 1888 General Conference Session and the decade following that Session.

At the General Conference Session in Minneapolis (1888), the Lord sent "a most precious message to His people through Elders Jones and Waggoner" (*Special Testimony to the Battle Creek Church*, p. 35). These men enlarged and emphasized this message during the years that followed. Not only did the message present "justification through faith in the Surety;" but "it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God." Christ, through the Holy Spirit, came near to His Church with the objective of "imparting the priceless gift of His own righteousness to the helpless human agent." This is "the third angel's message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and to be attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure" (*ibid.*, pp. 35-36).

It needs to be understood also that Christ as High Priest in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary was desirous of completing His work for man according to covenant promise. He had upon the Cross provided a sufficient sacrifice for the sins of mankind; but as our High Priest, He was "to complete His work, and fulfil His pledge to 'make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.' Isa. 13:12." (*Desire of*

*Ages*, p. 790). This work of Christ is noted in the Writings as "a special atonement for Israel," or "a final atonement" (*Early Writings*, pp. 251, 253).

The question of what was involved in making a man more precious than the golden wedge of Ophir, and how it was to be accomplished became the primary emphasis in the presentation of the message of righteousness by faith. The truth that the incarnation had a definite relationship to the atonement, as projected by Edward Irving (see Strong's *Systematic Theology*, p. 744) - though misunderstood and misapplied by him - now came into its own; and it was seen to be an essential and vital part of the message concerning the special work that Jesus desired to accomplish in and for man.\*

During this period, the special messengers whom the Lord sent presented the doctrine of the Incarnation. In 1890, the Pacific Press released a book of Dr. E. J. Waggoner, *Christ and His Righteousness*, which From (*Movement of Destiny*, p. 189) avers to be an edited presentation of the messages given by him at the 1888 General Conference Session. This is open to serious question and challenge. However, in the book, after setting forth Christ's divinity, Waggoner turns to the "wonderful story of His humiliation" (p. 189). He quotes and comments upon John 1:14 and Philippians 2:5-8. Then he writes: "Other scriptures that we will quote bring closer to us the fact of the humanity of Christ, and *what it means to us*" (p. 26). These other texts were Romans 8:3-4, Hebrews 2:16-17, and II Corinthians. 5:21.

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\*The doctrine of the incarnation cannot be separated from the teaching of the perfection of character which God intends His people to manifest in the final display of His glory on the earth. In His incarnate life, Christ finished the work the Father gave Him to do - having been given "power [εξουσια]" over all flesh - He glorified Him on the earth (John 17:2-4); He "condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8:3). This is to be repeated; for the final victors of earth are to overcome, "even as [Jesus] overcame" (Rev. 3:21).

Commenting on Romans 8:3-4, he wrote:

A little thought will be sufficient to show anybody that if Christ took upon Himself the likeness of man, in order that He might redeem man, it must have been sinful man that He was made like, for it was sinful man that He came to redeem. ... Moreover, the fact that Christ took upon Himself the flesh, not of a sinless being, but of sinful man, that is, that flesh which He assumed had all the weaknesses and sinful tendencies to which fallen human nature is subject, is shown by the statement that He "was made of the seed of David *according to the flesh*" (pp. 26-27; emphasis his).

In commenting on II Cor. 5:21, Waggoner wrote:

This is much stronger than the statement that He was made "in the likeness of sinful flesh." He was *made to be sin*. Here is the same mystery as that the Son of God should die. The spotless Lamb of God, who knew no sin, was made to be sin. Sinless, yet not only counted as a sinner, but actually taking upon Himself sinful nature. *He* was made to be sin in order that we might be made righteousness (*ibid.* pp. 27-28; emphasis his).

How does the incarnation relate to us being made righteous? Observe the further observations of Waggoner:

He [Christ] is "touched with the feeling of our infirmity." That is, having suffered all that sinful flesh is heir to, He knows all about it, and so closely does He identify Himself with His children that whatever presses upon them makes an impression upon Him, and He knows how much Divine power is necessary to resist it; and if we but sincerely desire to deny "ungodliness and worldly lusts," He is able and anxious to give us strength "exceeding abundantly, above all that we ask or think." All the power which Christ had dwelling in Him by nature, we may have dwelling in us by grace, for He freely bestows it upon us (*ibid.*, p. 30).

Then he adds:

What wonderful possibilities there are for Christians! To what heights of holiness he may attain! No matter how much Satan may war against him, assaulting him where the flesh is weakest, he may abide under that shadow of the

Almighty, and be filled with the fullness of God's strength (*ibid.*, pp. 30-31).

Thus Dr. Waggoner inseparably linked the truth of the incarnation – that Christ took upon Himself the fallen, sinful nature of man – and the objective of the atonement – "that Christ may dwell in [our] hearts by faith," "that [we] might be filled with all the fullness of God" – the "heights of holiness" to which we may attain.

At the 1891 General Conference Session, Elder Waggoner gave a series of studies on the book of Romans. In these studies the same emphasis appears as in his book, *Christ and His Righteousness*. In the 8<sup>th</sup> study, he noted the attribute of a priest as one who had compassion, and observed that the compassion of Christ was revealed by the fact that "it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren." Then he asked, "What is done by the compassion of Christ? ... What benefit is the compassion of Christ to us?" To these questions, he answered:

He [Christ] knows the strength we need. He knows what we need, when we need it, and how we need it. So the work of Christ as priest, is for one thing, - to deliver us from sin.

His next question was – "What is the power of Christ's priesthood?" To this question the answer was given:

He is made a priest "not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an *endless life*." That is the power by which Christ delivers you and me from sin this day, and this hour, and every moment that we believe in Him.

Dr. Waggoner considered the power of the "endless life" as coming from two sources: 1) It was a divine power, and 2) the earthly life of Christ in the flesh was a life free from sin; therefore "death could not hold Him." To the objection that this was good theory in the case of Christ, but we are the flesh of sin, he replied – "That is true; but in the flesh there may be the divine life that was in Christ when He was in the flesh" (*GC Bulletin*, 1891, pp. 130-131).

In the 10<sup>th</sup> Study, Waggoner returned to the concept of the power of an endless life as it pertains to the individual. He asked – “Now how do we get hold of Christ? How do we get the benefit of that righteous life of His? Here was his answer:

**It is in the act of death. At what point is it that we touch Christ, and make the connection? At what point in the ministry of Christ is it that He touches us, and affects the union? - It is at the lowest possible point where man can be touched, and that is death. In all points He was made like His brethren, so He takes the very lowest of these – the point of death, - and there it is, when we are actually dead, we step into Christ.**

But since Christ arose, we too, rise to newness of life. “That new life, - that newness of life which we have, is the life of Christ, and it is a **SINLESS LIFE.**” In this same study, Waggoner declared this to be the very heart, life, and power of the message of righteousness by faith. He said:

**In all our Christian experience we have left little loopholes along here and there for sin. We have never dared to come to that place where we would believe that the Christian life should be a sinless life. We have not dared to believe it or to preach it. But in that case we cannot preach the law of God fully. Why not? Because we do not understand the *power* of justification by faith. Then without justification by faith it is impossible to preach the law of God to the fullest extent (1891 *GC Bulletin*, pp. 156, 159).**

Herein is the difference between justification by faith as presented in the Protestant Reformation and the doctrine as brought to the Church in 1888. While the basic foundation was the same – the just shall live by faith – it was in the 1888 message that the full application of what it meant was made – the power to keep from sinning. In other words, a people were to be prepared of whom it could be said – “Here are they that keep the commandments of God.”

In the 12<sup>th</sup> study all the teaching of righteousness by faith was linked with the incarnation. In discussing “the old man,” and our marriage to this “body of sin” as Paul presented it in Romans 7, Waggoner observed

that we were one with it. Just so, when we are crucified with Christ, and rise to a new relationship, we are married to Christ, and thus one with Him. On this point, he commented:

**What a precious thought it is, that we are one flesh with Christ! In this we see the mystery of the incarnation appearing again. If we can believe that Christ was in the flesh, God incarnate in Christ, we can believe this, - Christ dwelling in us, and working through us, - through our flesh, just the same as when He took flesh upon Himself and controlled it (1891 *GC Bulletin*, p. 195).**

In 1892, Elder E. J. Waggoner accepted a call to become editor of the *Present Truth* published in England. He did not again speak before a General Conference Session until 1897. At that Session he presented nineteen studies primarily on the first section of the book of Hebrews. In these studies he maintained the same position on the nature of Christ’s humanity that he had held six years previously.

In discussing Hebrews 2:9, which states that Jesus “was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death,” Waggoner commented – “He was made a little lower than the angels; He was man. So that when we consider Him now, we consider Him as man, and from this point through we have Jesus before us all the time, but always as man. Never forget that” (1897 *GC Bulletin*, p. 45). To emphasize how closely Jesus has identified Himself with man, Waggoner observed that Jesus did not abandon man when he sinned, but accepted the curse in Himself, even the curse that man received because of sin. He asked the question – “Where is that point where the curse falls upon Christ? In answer to his own question, he said – “Sinful flesh. Not only sinful flesh, but that which stands as the symbol of the curse that falls upon Christ – the cross” (*ibid.*). To Waggoner, the crucifixion did not begin at Calvary, for he declared – “Christ taking fallen, sinful humanity upon Him, is Christ crucified” (*ibid.*, p. 57).

In contrasting the difference between the two Adams, Waggoner emphasized what he understood the Scripture to mean which said – “The Word was made flesh.” He stated, “the

Word was made perfect flesh in Adam, but in Christ was the Word made fallen flesh. Christ goes down to the bottom, and there is the Word flesh, sinful flesh" (*ibid.*, p. 57).

In 1901, Waggoner gave a sermon at the General Conference Session which focused on the subject of the humanity of Christ, but because of its timing and connection with the doctrinal issues that came before that Session, his observations will be given in the chapter on the Holy Flesh Movement.

From 1892 and onward the burden for the presentation of the Message of 1888, and the truth in regard to the incarnation at the General Conference sessions rested upon A. T. Jones. At both the 1893 and 1895 sessions, Jones used the same theme – "The Third Angel's Message." In the 10<sup>th</sup> study of the 1893 series, Jones discussed the "white raiment" with which the saints are to be clothed. Of this garment, he declared:

Brethren, that garment was woven in a human body. The human body – the flesh of Jesus – was the loom was it not? That garment was woven in Jesus; in the same flesh that you and I have, for He took part of the same flesh and blood that we have. That flesh that is yours and mine, that Christ bore in this world – that was the loom in which God wove the garment for you and me to wear in the flesh, and He wants us to wear it now, as well as when the flesh is made immortal in the end!

What was the loom? Christ in His human flesh. What was it that was made here? [Voice: The garment of righteousness] And it is for all of us. The righteousness of Christ – the life that He lived – for you and for me, that we are considering tonight, that is the garment ... It was God in Christ. Christ is to be in us, just as God was in Him, and His character is to be in us, just as God was in Him, and His character is to be woven and transformed into us through these sufferings and temptations and trials which we meet. And God is the weaver, but not without us. It is the co-operation of the divine and the human – the mystery of God in you and me – the same mystery that was in the gospel, and that is the third angel's message (1893 *GC Bulletin*, p. 207).

In the above statement Jones clearly indicated that the doctrine of the incarnation which teaches that Christ took upon Himself the fallen nature of man is inseparably linked with the message of righteousness by faith, and this combined message is the third angel's message. Furthermore, this whole concept was linked with the perfection that must be man's in the final hour of human history.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> study, Jones discussed the demands of the Law of God. It demands "perfect love, manifested 'out of a pure heart, a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned'" Man can only respond, "I have not got it: I have done my best." But the Law replies:

That is not what I want; I don't want your best; I want perfection. It is not *your* doing I want anyhow, it is God's I want: it is not your righteousness I am after: I want God's righteousness from you: it is not your doing I want: I want God's doing in your life.

What can man say to this? Nothing, absolutely nothing! What is the answer? Here is the answer that Jones gave:

But there comes a still small voice saying, "Here is perfect life; here is the life of God: here is a pure heart; here is a good conscience; here is faith unfeigned." Where does that voice come from? [Congregation: "Christ"] Ah, the Lord Jesus Christ, who came and stood where I stand. In the flesh in which I live; He lived there; the perfect love of God was manifested there; the perfect purity of heart manifested there; a good conscience manifested there; and the unfeigned faith of the mind that was in Jesus Christ, is there. And Jones added - "The law wants to see that thing *in me*" (*ibid.*, p. 412; emphasis his).

In the 1895 GC series of studies which Jones gave, he enunciated the doctrine of the Incarnation and the nature of Christ's humanity more clearly and more completely than had been done previously in any single presentation. He began the study by noting the common source from which the humanity we possess was derived. "One man is the source and head of all human nature. And the genealogy of Christ, as one of us, runs to Adam. ... All coming from one man according to the flesh, are all of one. Thus

on the human side, Christ's nature is precisely our nature" (p. 231). In commenting on John 1:14 - "And the Word was made flesh" - Jones asked the question - "Now what kind of flesh is it?" In answering this question, he asked another, and amplified the answer as follows:

**What kind of flesh alone is it that this world knows? - Just such flesh as you and I have. This world does not know any other flesh of man, and has not known any other since the necessity of Christ's coming was created. Therefore, as this world knows only such flesh as we have, as it is now, it is certainly true that when "the Word was made flesh," He was made just such flesh as ours is. It cannot be otherwise (*Ibid.*).**

In this argument, Jones was but echoing Edward Irving, who had declared, "That Christ took our fallen nature, it is most manifest, because there was no other in existence to take" (See Chapter II, Footnote 7).

[As one reads closely the six studies devoted to a discussion of the humanity of the Son of God in the Incarnation which A. T. Jones gave at the 1895 GC Session, one is impressed with the emphasis which parallels the basic position of Edward Irving of England. This leads one to wonder if E. J. Waggoner, after his arrival in England, obtained Irving's *Works* and sent them to his friend and co-messenger. However, Jones studiously avoided the basic error of Irving in attributing to Christ's human nature the cultivated sins of man. There can be no doubt that Jones considered his 1895 presentation of the incarnation an advanced step from any previous study on this subject. He said - "We are here studying the same subject that we have been studying these three or four years; but God is leading us further along in the study of it, and I am glad" (1895 *GC Bulletin*, p. 330).]

Turning to Hebrews 2:9 Jones noted that Christ was not made "lower than the angels" as man was when he was created - "that was sinless flesh - but Christ was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death - where man is since he sinned and became subject to death" (1895, *GC Bulletin*, pp. 232-233).

The next point in his structure of truth on the incarnation was based on Heb. 4:14 - Christ "was in all points tempted as we are." Concerning this Jones said:

**He [Christ] could not have been tempted in all points as I am, if he were not in all points as I am to start with. ... Christ was in *the place*, and He had *the nature* of the whole human race - and in Him meet all the weaknesses of mankind, so that every man on the earth who can be tempted at all, finds in Christ power against that temptation. For every soul there is in Jesus Christ victory against all temptation, and relief from the power of it. That is the truth (*ibid.*, pp.233-234: emphasis his).**

In the study the following evening, Jones returned to the point of inheritance which man received from Adam. He stated "there is not a single drawing toward sin, there is not a single tendency to sin, in you and me that was not in Adam when he stepped out of the garden." "All the tendencies to sin that are in the human race came from Adam. Jesus Christ felt all these temptations; He was tempted upon all these points in the flesh which He derived from David, from Abraham, and from Adam." He reminded his hearers - "And there is such a thing as heredity." What did this mean in Jones' thinking as it applied to the incarnation? He stated:

**Now that law of heredity reached from Adam to the flesh of Jesus Christ as certainly as it reached from Adam to the flesh of any of the rest of us; for He was one of us. In Him there were things that reached Him from Adam; in Him there were things that reached Him from David, from Manasseh, from the genealogy away back from the beginning until His birth. Thus in the flesh of Jesus Christ, not in *Himself*, but in His flesh - our flesh that He took in the human nature - there were just the same tendencies to sin that are in you and me (*Ibid.*, p. 266).**

But as each temptation sought to draw Him through the tendencies of the flesh, Jesus Christ "by His trust in God" received power to say, No, "and thus, though being in the likeness of sinful flesh, condemned sin in the flesh."

In making these assertions, A. T. Jones was very careful to clarify two points: 1) "There is a difference between a tendency to sin, and the open appearing of that sin in the actions." And 2) "Those sins which we have committed, - we ourselves felt the guilt of them, and were conscious of condemnation because of them.

These were all *imputed* to Him; they were all laid upon Him" (*ibid.*, p. 267; emphasis supplied). Thus Jones carefully differentiated between inherited tendencies to sin which are common to man's nature, which Christ took, and the cultivated habits of evil which each man develops in his own life through yielding to sin. The former Christ accepted in coming under the great law of heredity; the latter He bore *vicariously* when He became the sin offering at Calvary. Because of this Jones was able to say:

O, He is a complete Saviour. He is a Saviour from sins committed, and the Conqueror of the tendencies to commit sins. In Him we have the victory (*ibid.*).

What does this victory mean to us? Is it imparted, or imputed? Is it just something we look at and adore, or is it something we, too, can experience? Jones discussed this point in his next study at the Session.

(Chapter IV will be concluded in the March issue of WWN)

## The Papal Objective

(*L'Osservatore Romano*, 1, December 2004)

"On Sunday, 28, November, in St. Peter's Square before leading the recitation of the Angelus, the Holy Father reflected on the new liturgical year and this year dedicated to the Eucharist. The following is a translation of the Pope's address, given in Italian.

"Today begins a new liturgical year with the *first Sunday of Advent*; during this year, we will contemplate with special fervour *the face of Christ present in the Eucharist*. Jesus, the Incarnate Word who died and has risen, is the centre of history. The Church adores him and grasps in him the ultimate and unifying meaning of all the mysteries of the faith: the love of God that gives life.

"It is in Italy precisely in these days that the preparatory work for the *XXIV National Eucharistic Congress*, to be held in Bari, Italy, from 21 to 29 May 2005, is starting. The theme of this important ecclesial meeting, which by providential coincidence places more emphasis on the Year of Eucharist, is: '*We cannot live without Sunday.*'

"I invite the Italian Ecclesial Community to prepare most carefully for this spiritual appointment, rediscovering 'with new intensity the meaning of Sunday: its 'mystery,' its celebration, its significance for Christian and human life' (Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini*, n. 3)." [All emphasis theirs].

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There is a "trinity" of "persons" noted – God, and His Son, Jesus Christ, also "an honored angel;" but only a "duality" of Gods – God and His Son. All of this requires some homework, before we take our "pens" and start writing about the "devil's" trinities.

## **"The Devil's Trinities"**

A friend on the West Coast sent me an article from *Landmarks* (Feb. 2001), with the above caption. Written by the only theologian this segment of "independents" has, I read it with interest. I was surprised that one would seek to prove "the central doctrine of [Roman] Catholic faith" (*Handbook for Today's Catholic*, p. 11) by Paganism, - - - and in so doing embrace it!

There is no question that paganism is devil inspired and has multiple trinities. Lucifer desired to be as God, and a part of the council of God (See Eze. 28:2; Isa. 14:13-14). He was not, but aspired to so be. If the Godhead then were a Trinity, then for Satan to appear to be a part of what he was not, Paganism would have a "Quartet" at the head of its various manifestations. It doesn't, and thus indicates rather the duality of God in the beginning. Paganism in its various "trinities" presents a duality of God plus one, Lucifer, making it Trinitarian.

The first publication of the Writings setting forth the Great Controversy motif, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. I, had as its first sentence - "The Lord has shown me that Satan was once an honored angel in heaven, next to Jesus Christ." (p. 17). In the same paragraph one reads - "And I saw that when God said to His Son, Let us make man in our image, Satan was jealous of Jesus." A further sentence reads - "He wished to be the highest in heaven, next to God."