

Focus on the Kingdom

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My Story: To God Be the Glory

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Joel Hemphill and his wife LaBreeska have been in the preaching and Gospel music ministry for over 45 years. They have traveled around the world, and along with their family, have written and recorded over 300 Gospel songs. They have received 8 Dove Awards and had numerous #1 songs. Joel has been nominated 10 times by the Gospel Music Association as "Song Writer of the Year." They make their home in Nashville, Tennessee. Joel spoke at our recent Theological Conference:

I'm here first of all to thank you for your courage in holding on to this truth and helping pray us to this point. We're fairly new in this understanding, about three years now, and so we're debtors to you. Paul said in Romans 1:14, "I am a debtor," and we're debtors to you and want to thank you for your prayers, for your love, for this opportunity to speak from my heart for a few minutes. I'll just tell my story...

...In 2002 I got hold of a book called *The Doctrine of the Trinity: Christianity's Self-Inflicted Wound*. I thought, this is interesting; I've never believed in the Trinity. I was Oneness...It looked interesting and I read it. It had to germinate so I laid it aside for about a year. God has different ways of bringing us to proper understanding...

In Israel we were sponsored by a very dear lady who came to this understanding 35 years ago. She was a Gospel music promoter. God opened her understanding. She tried to share it with a few people and they didn't understand it, so she just had to keep it to herself. We were sitting on her balcony drinking coffee, overlooking the Sea of Galilee, the most beautiful view I've ever seen, and she said, "Joel, why don't we let Jesus be who he said he is — the Son of God?" I said, "Wow! That's right." So that began to soak in, and then some friends of ours wrote and recorded a song, "God So Loved," which is God's viewpoint of Calvary. You see, Christianity has made Calvary a display of Jesus' love. And yes, Jesus went there in love. Paul said Jesus loved the Church and gave himself for it. But we've forgotten John 3:16: "For **God** so loved..." It's a display of God the Father's love. These friends of ours wrote this song from that perspective. I would play that CD in my truck and weep aloud over it. I developed an empathy for God the Father. I began to see God.

So in November of 2005 the scales began to fall from my eyes. I began to write. I thought I was writing a

Gospel tract — just Scriptures about God. I read Isaiah 44:24 where God says, "I created it all by Myself. There was no God with Me. I did it alone." I began to find other Scriptures about One God in the Old and New Testaments and began to write those. I was driven to write...It established a foundation in my mind of who God is — who the one Most High God is. He revealed Himself to me in His word. I now see God the Father on every page. Yes, I see Jesus — the supernaturally conceived, virgin-born, sinless Son of God, our Savior, Redeemer, Messiah, soon-coming King, but his Father is now my God! Jesus is my Savior, my Messiah.

My understanding was completed when I went through the book of Revelation and highlighted every time it says "God," "Jesus," and "Lamb." It says God 99 times, Jesus 14 times, and Lamb 29 times. The focus of the book is clearly God the Father. I was looking for who is on that main throne; who is the King of the universe? In my mind it was Jesus. And when I could not put Jesus on that main throne in heaven, I stood in our living room and literally wailed. I had to change Gods. That's the day I changed Gods! Can I say that? Jesus was my God, and it was an emotional adjustment. So I can have compassion on people who struggle with this. God used different ways to bring me to this understanding, but ultimately He revealed Himself to me in His word.

So I wrote this book called *To God Be the Glory*. I would wake up every morning at 5 o'clock with a question in my mind: Where is Jesus now? I had to answer that question for myself. He's at the right hand of the Father. What is he doing there? He's our intercessor. Hebrews says that he's expecting. May I humbly say, God the Father is not expecting anything! He just speaks and it's done. But Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father with a right to expect what God the Father promised him in Psalm 110:1: "Sit at My right hand until I make your enemies your footstool." So I saw that Jesus came at Bethlehem, spoken before time, brought forth in time, in the womb of a virgin, promised the throne of his father David. There's not a verse in the Bible that promises Jesus God's throne in heaven. Jesus said in Revelation 3:21, "He who overcomes I will grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I overcame and sat down with my father in His throne." God the Father is the King of Universe and His glory is the ultimate glory!

This is why my book is called *To God Be the Glory*. In Isaiah 42 the first seven verses are about the Messiah, an awesome promise about our Lord Jesus who was to

come in Bethlehem some 740 years later. But God the Father says in verse 8: “My glory I will not give to another.” This was very strong in opening my understanding. In Isaiah 48:11 He says it again. I began to see the distinction between God the Father’s glory and Jesus’ glory. God the Father’s glory is innate. Jesus’ glory is a given glory. There’s absolutely no comparison between God the Father’s glory and Jesus’ glory. Jesus has awesome glory. He told his disciples, “You will see the Son of Man coming in great glory.” Jesus’ glory is so great that the brightness of his coming will destroy the antichrist. But Jesus’ glory is a given glory...

1 Peter 1:20-21 says Christ was “foreordained before the foundation of the world,” not preexistent, “but manifest in these last times for you, who through him believe in God who raised him up from dead and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in **God.**” I realized that in my sincere desire to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ I gave him God the Father’s glory. I repented of that and I no longer do that. Glory, honor and praise to our Lord Jesus Christ, but the ultimate glory goes to the Most High God the Father! When we do that we’re obeying so many Scriptures that say, “Give unto God the glory due unto His name.”

I never thought the day would come when we would have to defend God as the Creator! Christianity has taken the creation and given it to Jesus. As you know Jesus’ part in creation is redeeming creation. The first Adam lost it through sin; the last Adam bought it back at Calvary through his righteous blood. But we’ve taken God’s throne and given it to Jesus; we’ve taken the creation and given it to Jesus; we’ve taken God’s name and given it to Jesus! God told Moses at the burning bush, “My eternal name is the Lord God,” and He called Himself the Lord God over 200 times in the book of Ezekiel. When the angel appeared to Mary he said, “The Lord God...” Who is that? That’s God the Father: “The Lord God shall give to this child the throne of his father David.” He’s called Lord God 9 times in the book of Revelation. So I’m out now to give God the Father the glory due to His name!

Revelation 14:6-7 says, “I saw an angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel”...The end-time message declared by a mighty angel is “Fear God and give glory to Him and worship Him.” Who is that? God the Father, the Creator. “Worship Him who created the heavens, and the earth, and the seas, and the fountains of water.” So when we give God the Father His glory we’re right on message, and we’re right on time...

If anybody asks you what I believe you be quick to tell them. I’m not going to hide it. We’re telling everybody that this is the message for today. I told my wife LaBreeska, “We have the truth and we’re not going to act like we don’t.” We don’t have to hide it. I sent a

tract called “Can You Face Reality?” to over 91,000 Christian ministers. Another tract, “Shocking Admissions” has gone out to over 43,000 Christian ministers, and we’re getting ready to send out more. We’ve given away hundreds of books, *To God Be the Glory*.

Now I pray to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of my Lord Jesus Christ, and my God. And I have absolutely just fallen in love with God the Father! Jesus said in Mark 12:29 that’s the greatest commandment. “Thou shalt the Lord thy God with all thy heart and all thy mind and all thy strength.” How are people going to love God the Father if they don’t know who He is?

I’m preaching to the choir. We love you all. Thank you again for praying for us, for holding onto this truth. ✧

Our Recent Conference

The seventeenth annual “theological conference” was an exhilarating experience for everyone who attended. Some came from England and from Germany. We were united in our belief that God is the God of the Bible, the one God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the one who in Jesus’ words is “the only one who is truly God” (John 17:3). That central creed needs to be understood by every one of earth’s 6 billion inhabitants. Other contradictory views of God presently divide world religions on a massive scale and prevent Bible readers from resonating with the words of Jesus about who he is — the Messiah, *the Son* of God, certainly not God Himself. There is only one God, not two. Two Gods is one too many.

The beautiful Simpsonwood Conference Center located in north Atlanta provided just the right setting for informative sessions on biblical topics. We enjoyed 12 presentations including those from Sean Finnegan, Alex Hall, Chuck Jones and Dustin Smith who may be heard also at the archived radio site www.thebyteshow.com Other seasoned Bible students tackled various aspects of the Christian faith. All the speakers may be heard by you the reader (if you have access to the internet), thanks to the marvel of modern technology, at www.kingdomready.org/theo. The papers are also available at that site. There is also a link to some wonderful pictures of this year’s meeting which Michele Cox has captured very well. DVDs are available (see page 7). Six attendees were baptized by immersion in the Chattahoochee River. Some were rebaptisms since coming to the knowledge that God is One seemed to require a new commitment to the God *of* Jesus and not the God/Jesus of so much misguided theology.

The conference gathered together from widely different faith journeys, folk who have suffered at the

hands of false beliefs and are finding the simple truths of the Bible, often withheld from the churchgoing public, as balm to their souls. New friendships are created around the Messianic faith of Jesus and hope of a new world coming when Jesus returns to rule the world in the Kingdom. Perhaps you would seriously like to consider joining the 18th conference in 2009. Dates will be announced. ✧

John 17:5 — a Trap for the Unwary Bible Reader

This verse is very frequently a weapon of Trinitarians against the pure monotheism of Jesus and the apostolic Church. In it Jesus said, “Now, Father, glorify me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.”

Many readers take a leap from this saying into the Trinitarian theology which lies several centuries ahead of the time of Jesus. The public has been schooled to believe that Jesus was God the Son, a second member of an eternal Triune God or Trinity. With this conviction that “Jesus is God,” surely John 17:5 provides just the biblical proof Trinitarians need for reassurance. What, however, if minds are made up *before* the text in John 17:5 is carefully examined in its overall biblical context? Is it a solid fact that Jesus, when he asked for the glory which he “had” before the world was, was asking to *regain a glory* which he once possessed literally before he was a human being?

Jesus did not speak twentieth-century English and we must do him the honor of understanding his language in the context of first-century patterns of thought. If announce that “I’m mad about my flat,” many of you will automatically assume that I am upset over my flat tire. There I am, sweating it out on the side of the highway, struggling to make my car driveable once again. But I actually meant no such thing. You might be upset that I had misled you! In fact what I meant in my native British English is that “I’m excited about my apartment.” To be “mad” about something means in English as I learnt (not learned!) it, to be excited about it or very keen on it. But in American English the ideas conveyed are quite different. In the USA one is “angry about a flat tire” — “mad about a flat.”

Many churchgoers have not troubled to understand Jesus in his first-century context, and they read their own inherited version of Jesus’ words into his *actual* words and Jewish expressions. Certainly in modern English, if someone *had* glory with the Father before the creation, this might mean that he was personally and consciously there with the Father before Genesis. But Jesus was not speaking your language! He was not necessarily using words just as you do today.

Let me suggest to you a better procedure for understanding Jesus and thus for gaining a grasp of his

“health-giving words” (1 Tim. 6:3). This is a matter of trying to think like Jesus and be like Jesus. And sometimes your church experience has hindered you rather than helped you.

Because no one has challenged you to consider a more Hebrew way of understanding Jesus, you may find it odd and unacceptable that your long-standing patterns of thinking are going to be called into question.

So let us first apply the golden rule for all Bible study: we must all carefully examine the context of a given verse. Sometimes that context is the whole of the Bible. **If Jesus was claiming to be an eternal, uncreated, self-existent “God the Son” who experienced glory alongside the eternal Father from eternity past, Jesus would have been contradicting everything that the Old Testament had said about the Messiah, son of David, promised as Savior.** Not only that — Jesus would have been flatly contradicting the very creed which he had announced *only two verses earlier* in John 17:3. If John 17:5 means that Jesus was a glorious personal Being, equal in every way to God, then he would be erasing the truth which he had declared so plainly in John 17:3.

Is it reasonable to read John 17:5 in a way which stifles the precious truth of John 17:3? In John 17:3 Jesus gave us a vitally important summary statement about who God was and who Jesus was. And they certainly were not both equally God! Listen carefully to John 17:3 and dig your theological stake deep into this primary text for defining God, i.e. who is God and who is not God. Jesus said, addressing his Father: “This is what eternal life means: that they may come to know **You [Father], the only one who is truly God**, and Jesus Christ whom you commissioned.” It cannot be too difficult to understand that if the Father is “the only” or sole “true God” then no one else is. If this is not true, then language has ceased to have meaning and Scripture is a revelation of nothing!

Jesus, then, was *not* God. He said it plainly also in Mark 12:29 where again he recited and approved the Jewish unitarian creed, confining God to a single Person. (For further detail, please see our recent book *Jesus Was Not a Trinitarian*, available at 800-347-4261 or www.focusonthekingdom.org/books.html)

If Jesus cannot be God, because only the Father is truly God (John 17:3), what did he mean when he asked for glory at the end of his selfless mission in Israel?

The plain fact is that in verses 22 and 24 of the very same chapter Jesus defined the glory he referred to as the same glory which was given to you, the reader now living. Yes, you too *had* that same glory before the world began. But you of course were not personally alive then. “The glory which *You have given* me I *have given* to them, that they may be one, just as we are one” (John 17:22). Jesus is here praying for Christians who

were not yet born. They are to have (in fact they already “had” it in God’s intention and promise) the same glory which Jesus asked for. God, Jesus said, had already given those yet unborn Christians the same glory Jesus was asking for himself. It was glory as **promised in God’s plan**. Jesus further defined what sort of glory he had in mind: “Father, I desire that they also, whom You *have given me*, be with me where I am, so that they may see my [future] glory which *You have given me*, for You loved me before the foundation of the world” (John 17:24).

Jesus had been promised that glory from the beginning and he now asked to have it bestowed on him. You can have something, in Jewish ways of thinking, “with God,” meaning that it is planned and promised for the future. John 17:5 means that Jesus desired that God now give him the glory which he “had,” stored up in God’s plan for the future.

When Paul said that Christians now “have” an eternal body in heaven (2 Cor. 5:1), he meant that we have it *in God’s promise*. We do not have it in actuality, but we will be given it at the resurrection when Jesus returns. Do you have an eternal body now? Obviously not. But Paul says you “have” it, meaning that you possess it in God’s promise. Jesus said also that if we do not behave humbly as we should, “you *have* no reward with your Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 6:1). The meaning is obviously that we have no reward *stored up with God*. In John 17:5 Jesus is asking God to grant him at the end of his ministry the reward of the glory stored up with the Father from before the beginning of creation. Jesus “had” that glory in God’s predetermined Plan. When Jesus was resurrected he received it in reality and he is now the glorified man at the right hand of the Father (1 Tim. 2:5).

If you think Jesus was claiming to be God, just as the Father is God, you are committed to belief in two who are God, and that destroys the rest of the Bible, which thousands and thousands of times declares that God is a single Person, the Father of Jesus, the “only one who is truly God” (John 17:3). ✧

The Baptism of Jesus and the Doctrine of the Trinity

A Study of Mark 1:9-11

by Clifford Dousseau

“It was at this time that Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan River by John. And at once, as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit, like a dove, descending on him. And a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my Son, the Beloved; my favor rests on you’” (Mark 1:9-11, New Jerusalem Bible).

The account of the baptism (immersion) of Jesus by John the Baptist in the Jordan River is reported by all

the Synoptics [Matthew, Mark, Luke] with some variation but is omitted by the fourth gospel. Instead of Jesus coming to John’s baptism for the forgiveness of sins, John says of him, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

The New Jerome Biblical Commentary says, “Mark has a straightforward account (1:9-11), theologically naïve¹ and unembarrassed. But, after he had written it down, the story quickly became an embarrassment to the early church, because it was thought unsuitable that the sinless Jesus should be baptized for sins. Matthew therefore omits the reference in Mark 1:4 to the forgiveness of sins and adds [Matthew 3:14-15]” (p. 637).

The dominance of infant baptism later increased Christianity’s embarrassment over this event and over the similar account of the baptism (immersion) of the eunuch from Ethiopia who worked as a treasurer under Queen Candace in Acts 8:36-39: “Further along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, ‘Look, here is some water; is there anything to prevent my being [immersed]?’ He ordered the chariot to stop, then Philip and the eunuch both went down into the water and he [immersed] him. But after they had come out of the water again Philip was taken away by the Spirit of the Lord, and the eunuch never saw him again but went on his way rejoicing” (New Jerusalem Bible). Both episodes depicted: (1) an adult/believer’s baptism; (2) immersion; (3) a river or stream of living water as the element and place of baptism.

Ignoring its significance as a model for Christian baptism, Trinitarians have since the councils of Nicea (325 AD) and Constantinople (381 AD) brandished this important incident in the very opening of the gospel of Mark as a formidable proof and illustration of the doctrine of the Trinity. *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* says, “In later Christian tradition the baptism is regarded as the first NT revelation of the Trinity, economically, because Father, Son, and Spirit are here together (Jerome)” (p. 638).

We see this illustrated also in the writings of Augustine, a contemporary of Jerome, the translator of the Vulgate. One of the greatest Christian writers, he writes in Sermon II:

“Here then we have the Trinity in a certain sort distinguished. The Father in the Voice, — the Son in the Man, — the Holy Spirit in the Dove. It was only needful just to mention this, for most obvious is it to see. For the notice of the Trinity is here conveyed to us plainly and without leaving room for doubt or hesitation. For the Lord Christ Himself coming in the form of a servant to John, is doubtlessly the Son: for it cannot be said that it

¹ Mark was in fact a highly sophisticated inspired writer of Scripture! — *ed.*

was the Father, or the Holy Spirit. ‘Jesus,’ it is said, ‘comes’ (Matt. 3:13), that is, the Son of God. And who has any doubt about the Dove? or who says, ‘What is the Dove?’ when the Gospel itself most plainly testifies, ‘The Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove’ (Matt. 3:16). And in like manner as to that voice there can be no doubt that it is the Father’s, when He says, ‘Thou art My Son’ (Matt. 3:17; Mark 1:11). Thus then we have the Trinity distinguished.

“2. And if we consider the places, I say with confidence (though in fear I say it), that the Trinity is in a manner separable. When Jesus came to the river, He came from one place to another; and the Dove descended from heaven to earth, from one place to another; and the very Voice of the Father sounded neither from the earth, nor from the water, but from heaven; these three are as it were separated in places, in offices, and in works. But one may say to me, ‘Show the Trinity to be inseparable rather. Remember that you who are speaking are a Catholic, and to Catholics are you speaking.’ For thus does our faith teach, that is, the true, the right Catholic faith, gathered not by the opinion of private judgment, but by the witness of the Scriptures, not subject to the fluctuations of heretical rashness, but grounded on Apostolic truth: this we know, this we believe. This though we see it not with our eyes, nor as yet with the heart, so long as we are being purified by faith, yet by this faith we most lightly and most strenuously maintain — that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are a Trinity inseparable; One God, not three Gods. But yet so One God, as that the Son is not the Father, and the Father is not the Son, and the Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son, but the Spirit of the Father and of the Son. This ineffable Divinity, abiding ever in itself, making all things new, creating, creating anew, sending, recalling, judging, delivering, this Trinity, I say, we know to be at once ineffable and inseparable.”

Here we see Augustine viewing Jesus as God, though the gospel of Mark has made no such declaration and in fact never makes such a declaration. And we see also the confusing doctrine of the Trinity presumed to be illustrated here: “the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are a Trinity inseparable; One God, not three Gods. But yet so One God, as that the Son is not the Father, and the Father is not the Son, and the Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son, but the Spirit of the Father and of the Son.” Echoed in the words of Augustine is the Athanasian Creed, a creed which teaches a doctrine about God far removed from the simplicity of the Shema (Deut. 6:4), which Jesus declared to be the greatest of the commandments given to Israel (Mark 12:29). “Hear, O Israel: Yahweh is our God – Yahweh is one.”

Many centuries later, we find Adam Clarke, the great Protestant commentator, continuing this exegetical

tradition. Though his words are found at the account of the baptism of Jesus in Matthew 3:16-17 rather than Mark 1:9-11, the same thoughts are applicable to Mark 1:9-11:

“This passage affords no mean proof of the doctrine of the *Trinity*. That *three* distinct *persons* are here, represented, there can be no dispute. 1. The *person* of *Jesus Christ*, baptized by John in Jordan. 2. The *person* of the *Holy Ghost* in a *bodily shape* (*somatiko eidei*, Luke 3:22) like a dove. 3. The *person* of the *Father*; a *voice* came out of heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, proceeding from a *different* place to that in which the *persons* of the *Son* and *Holy Spirit* were manifested; and merely, I think, more forcibly to mark this Divine *personality*.”

But does this passage actually afford “no mean proof of the doctrine of the Trinity”? Where does it say that Jesus is God? Where does it say that he is the second Person of the Godhead? Where does it say that the Spirit of God, well known in Judaism, is to be viewed as a person separate from God and different from the Jewish conception prevailing at that time and since? Why should the Gentile Christian conception of the Spirit of holiness be different from the Jewish conception?

In the popular *Barnes’ Notes on the New Testament*, we see Albert Barnes falling into the same rut:

“The baptism of Jesus has usually been considered a striking manifestation of the doctrine of the Trinity, or the doctrine that there are Three Persons in the Divine Nature.

“(1.) There is the person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, baptized in the Jordan, elsewhere declared to be equal with God, John 10:30.

“(2.) *The Holy Spirit*, descending in a bodily form upon the Savior. The Holy Spirit is also equal with the Father, or is also God, Acts 5:3; 4.

“(3.) *The Father*, addressing the Son, and declaring that he was well pleased with him. It is impossible to explain this transaction consistently in any other way than by supposing that there are three equal Persons in the Divine Nature or Essence, and that each of these sustains important parts in the work of redeeming men.”

Look at the numerous errors he makes!

(1) John 10:30, which he reads into this scene, is not a declaration by Jesus that he is equal to God. John Calvin recognized this way back during the Reformation. In his commentary on this verse, he wrote: “The ancients generally greatly perverted this passage when they would prove from it that Christ is identically of the same nature (or consubstantial with the Father), for Christ speaks not concerning any unity of substance, but of the mutual agreement between the Father and himself, to wit, affirming that whatsoever he does would be sanctioned by the Father.”

(2) Acts 5:3, 4 does not teach that the Spirit of God is equal with the Father or also God. In the very same chapter at Acts 5:32, a neuter pronoun is used in the Greek text for the Spirit: “We are witnesses to this fact, and so is the holy Spirit which (*hon*) God has bestowed on those who obey him.” Many translations wrongly translate *hon* (which) as “whom” here due to their Trinitarian bias (see, for example, the New Jerusalem Bible, Revised Standard Version, New American Standard Version, New International Version, and so on). The New American Bible, a Catholic translation, translates this correctly.

(3) This scene can be explained without recourse to the doctrine of the Trinity formulated several centuries later at Nicea (325 AD) and Constantinople (381 AD). It is not necessary to suppose, as Barnes does, that “there are three equal Persons in the Divine Nature or Essence, and that each of these sustains important parts in the work of redeeming men.”

It is a well-known fact among New Testament scholars that the gospel of Mark has the simplest view of Jesus of all the four gospels. This gospel does not have the ideas contained in the prologue of the fourth gospel, and it does not have the birth stories of Matthew 1-2 and Luke 1-2. It does not even have any resurrection appearances! The verses that contain these, Mark 16:9-20, are spurious and not by the original author, as the notes in all major Christian Bibles now indicate (see New American Bible, New Jerusalem Bible, and so on).

The gospel of Mark does not teach that Jesus is God, not at the account of the baptism of Jesus nor anywhere else. The saying of the scribes at Mark 2:7 (“Who can forgive sins but God alone?”), though often construed as a proof-text of the Deity of Jesus, is not really so when read in the light of the parallel account in Matthew 9:1-8. The account of the stilling of the storm (Mark 4:35-41) — “Who but God could act thus?” “Here was God fully manifest” (Adam Clarke) — the two accounts of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes (Mark 7:30-45; 8:1-10) — “a full proof of the divinity of Christ” (Adam Clarke) — and the walking on the sea story (Mark 6:45-52) — “Jesus showed forth his Godhead” (Adam Clarke) — are nowhere in the New Testament documents advanced as proof that Jesus was God. The gospel of John gives the purpose of his writing: “These [signs] are recorded so that you may believe that the Messiah, the Son of God, is Jesus” (John 20:31).

And Peter in his Pentecostal sermon in the Acts of the Apostles indicates that the signs and wonders of Jesus show that “Jesus the Nazarene was a man commended to you by God by the miracles and portents and signs that God worked through him when he was among you, as you know” (Acts 2:22). In the house of Cornelius, he stated that the miracles were a sign that God was with him: “You know what happened all over

Judea, how Jesus of Nazareth began in Galilee, after John had been preaching baptism. God...anointed him with the holy Spirit and with power, and because God was with him, Jesus went about doing good and curing all who had fallen into the power of the devil” (Acts 10:37-38). This is Peter’s comment on the baptism of Jesus (“God...anointed him with the holy Spirit...God was with him”); it does not teach the doctrine of the Trinity or say that Jesus was shown to be God. ✧

Comments

Review of *Jesus Was Not a Trinitarian* on Amazon.com: “As a member of the Society of Biblical Literature, I can attest to the scholarliness and soundness of this book written from a Socinian viewpoint. It is a sequel to a prior work entitled *The Doctrine of the Trinity: Christianity's Self-Inflicted Wound*. In the author’s own words, ‘*Jesus Was Not a Trinitarian* represents a Socinian view of the Son of God (after Faustus Socinus, 1539-1604)’ (page 327). It represents that ‘marginalized’ strand of Christianity which struggles to retain the words of Jesus himself (page 378).

“What the author does with two passages from the Gospel of Mark (12:29 and 12:35) is absolutely amazing. He in effect dismantles the Nicene-Constantinopolitan and Chalcedonian edifice of Trinitarianism which has prevailed in all branches of Christianity since the fourth century and shows persuasively why this is an error of Gentile Christianity unsubstantiable from the Hebrew Bible and the Greek New Testament, and why Judaism and Islam are right to reject it as heresy.

“The author dialogues with the finest scholars writing today and deftly employs concessions from them to make his case. If you know of anyone who is struggling with the irrationality of the doctrine of the Trinity and knows no viable alternative, I recommend that you buy them a copy of this book. This is definitely one of the most valuable gifts you could ever give to a soul seeking enlightenment. It has the power to spark a second Reformation.” — *Clifford Dourousseau, Istanbul, Turkey*

“Although I do not agree with you on the person of Jesus I do find you to be respectful when disagreeing with others. I know from experience many Trinitarians can be very unchristian in their dialogue I was still surprised to read this about you from a Christian teacher named Tom L. Ballinger:

‘There is currently a growing movement within a certain sect of Christendom proclaiming that Jesus Christ was a supernatural human being — but He was not God, nor even divine. They claim, “Jesus never once said he was God.” This group is headed up by an ex-Englishman now out of Morrow,

Georgia. He calls himself, "Sir Anthony Buzzard." Two things to notice; in America we do not, by law, have titles such as "Sir," or "Lord," or "Duke," and etc. The man's last name, Buzzard, isn't very flattering. You know what buzzards eat? But of course, we cannot choose our family name.'

As someone that ultimately disagrees with you for different reasons than Mr. Ballinger I will still apologize for him and his disgusting language." — *from email*

"I used to be a famous horror tales writer and a performer followed by a lot of pseudo Satanist people all around Latin America. I was interviewed on a lot of popular TV shows like 'Cristina's Show,' and others from Univision. On these shows, I always spoke against the Bible and sometimes I broke Bibles in front of the people, telling them that humanity had a lot of wars and crimes due to that book.

"But one day, I started reading 'that book.' And I started investigating. In the first place I found a lot of evidences that the book was written by God. Some of these proofs I publish at my site www.evangeliocristiano.com. And then I found that there are some groups that do not believe in the irrational doctrines of Christendom. I started learning from some Christadelphian works; then I felt that I had found the truth...except for the 'Devil's topic.' As an ex-horror writer, linked in some ways to Laveyan Satanists, I was very familiar with the doctrine that the Devil is not a real person. Lavey (founder of the Church of Satan) used to believe the same thing. He taught that the devil is the 'evil inside us' or that 'you are the devil.' So I never found this idea logical. And I refused it. I started thinking, 'I am a Christadelphian with a personal devil' and I thought that I was alone. Then I discovered your writings and others and I knew that I had found the truth.

"I left my past ways, trashed all the stuff related to demonism and horror and started preaching on the web. Some people thought that I was a fake; others thought I was a traitor. Well, the fact is that God knows the truth and I finally got baptized in His Son's name. Now I can baptize other people. I want to serve God and spread the word. Brother, I want to translate the *Focus on the Kingdom* into Spanish every month. You can put on your site 'Spanish version available' then. I want to help in any way possible.

"We feel we are the Church in Uruguay. We have a meeting place, we have members, and we have regular meetings now. We are not independent. We want to be part of the world Church and be counted among the missions the Church has around the world, because we respect you and others not as 'political leaders' but as spiritual old men that have more experience than me. And the Bible said that I need to listen to my old brothers." — *Uruguay*

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2008 Restoration Fellowship National Conference Australia

18th-20th July

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Theme: The Creed of Jesus

Keynote Speakers: Anthony Buzzard, Frank Selch, Greg Deuble (the Christian author whose book was banned by Koorong!)

Also Peter Barfoot, Steve Cook, Paul Herring

RSVP 9th July

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