

Focus on the Kingdom

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Anthony Buzzard, editor

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Y'all Please Come!

The 19th annual "Theological Conference" sponsored by Atlanta Bible College and Restoration Fellowship will be held in Atlanta at Simpsonwood Retreat Center from 25-28th April, 2010. Participants would fly in on the Sunday for the evening meal and session and leave after lunch on the Wednesday.

We are hoping to bring together a sizeable group of keen students of the Bible who are impassioned about the Kingdom of God Gospel and the great issues of the identity of God and Jesus. Christians need to take fellowship seriously as part of our mutual responsibility to each other. All are welcome and interaction with the speakers by way of questions and comments is a feature of our meetings.

These three days together in a beautiful Georgia setting can be invigorating and life-changing. Believers in the human Jesus are often scattered and isolated. Do please consider seriously spending these precious days with believers of like mind. Your presence there will be an enormous encouragement and blessing to others. You may want to give your own faith story, a brief account of your faith journey so far. These "stories" are often amongst the most gripping and memorable parts of our time together. The power of the internet, websites and publication and distribution via Amazon, etc, of existing and brand new books about Jesus and his relationship to the One God have vastly widened the availability of truth. Within a few years every one of the nearly seven billion people on earth will be reachable via the Internet. Already more than 1 1/2 billion are! Do come and celebrate these advances and the vital importance of truth with us, and learn of the recent appearance of very significant biblical unitarian sites. The impact on the world for the Gospel of the Kingdom is becoming limitless (Matt. 24:14). We are all part of the Great Commission, as servants of Jesus the Messiah. We hope that some of the leaders of the One God movement will speak and exhort us to faithful discipleship. ✧

Bringing Order and Sense to Your Bible Study

It is not uncommon to hear churchgoers complain that the Bible is hard to understand (Peter *did* say something like that in regard to *some* of Paul's writing! 2 Pet. 3:16). Bible reading, they say, is a chore, often a forced discipline, done from duty rather than love. This ought not to be. David exclaimed, "Oh, how I love Your

word; it is my meditation day and night" (Ps. 119:97). Paul spoke of the wonderful patience and comfort provided by Scripture: "For whatever was written in former times was written for our instruction, that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the Scriptures we may have hope" (Rom. 15:4, RSV).

The Bible is a necessary and delightful tonic to the Christian who has become attuned to its extraordinary message. That Gospel message is all-important, since it concerns your and my involvement with God's immortality program through the preaching, life, death and resurrection of God's one unique mediator between Himself and us, the man Jesus Christ (1 Tim 2:5). Your and my immortality is the only issue of ultimate importance and significance. Our lives should be lived with that goal firmly and clearly in mind. The trouble is that many churchgoers have learned things in church which cannot be found in the Bible. This makes the Bible a strange and distant document.

Those alien things confuse and clutter Bible study if we have not personally examined what we believe. It may take a jolt to make us aware of the dangers. The muddle, we suggest, comes from a disastrous *post-biblical* development which began as early as the second century. It is quite wrong to think that it was only at the time of Constantine in the fourth century that things went astray. Long before that the devastating poison of "Gnosticism," a pagan philosophical system, had crept into the church. **The church of the second century began not to sound like Jesus!** While Jesus was a Jew believing in the unitary monotheistic creed of his Jewish heritage (Mark 12:29), the Church claiming his name no longer did. To depart from the creed of Jesus is to depart from Jesus. John the apostle, writing towards the end of the first century, tried valiantly to warn of the impending clouds of confusion. He keeps on insisting that we believe "that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" (John 20:31). He never said as churches often do today: "You *must* believe that Jesus IS God, IS Yahweh."

He urged his contemporaries to "test the spirits" to see if they originated from God who gave His "spirit of Truth" (notice, not any old spirit or *spiritual experience*, but "the spirit of the truth"). John wrote: "He who confesses the Jesus who came as a human historical person," literally "Jesus Christ as the one who came in the flesh" (1 John 4:2) sounds like a true follower of Jesus! "But he who does not confess THAT¹ Jesus" is

¹ Those familiar with Greek will note the very important

not from God. He has been misled and deceived into believing in a *different* sort of Jesus (cp. 2 Cor. 11:4, where Paul treats the same warning theme).

It was not a question of believing in any Jesus as opposed to not believing in Jesus at all. It was a question of attaching oneself to the *real* Jesus, not the fictitious one who was the product of imagination, influenced by Gnosticism. Gnostics believed that the Creator God was far distant from His world and did not deal with human beings. Rather, it was necessary to have one or a series of secondary “eons” or divine beings. They could bridge the gap between the unapproachable God and struggling humanity. Gnostics believed that we were all preexisting “souls” trapped temporarily in bodies and longing to be freed from these bodies, so that we could “go home” to heaven, whence we came.

Church history shows that the second-century church battled that blatant Gnosticism. But the facts are that *despite its claims and intentions*, it allowed in through the back door elements of the very pagan Gnosticism which it thought it had excluded. So today the doctrine of the immortal soul, which causes us to think that the dead are really alive without bodies, prevails as an unquestioned dogma in many circles. In the same way Christian hymns and prayers and popular songs are laced with misleading language about “going home,” flying off to heaven, leaving this earth for our real destination.

All this propaganda may be comforting, but is it true? The notion of bodiless existence does not sound like Jesus at all. Many scholars, including Bishop N.T. Wright, the celebrated Bishop of Durham, are complaining about the paganism we wrongly call Christianity. None of this “heaven at death” language reflects Jesus. Though many profess and desire to love and follow Jesus, their habitual language tells another story.

On a cruise recently I found a standard Greek lexicon in the ship’s library. Pulling it from the shelves I turned to the entry on the word “earth” in Greek, which is a two-letter word spelled “ge” (pronounced in modern Greek “ye”; hence “geography,” study of the earth). This word means simply earth or land, and as the dictionary noted it means “earth *as opposed to* heaven.”

Lovers of Jesus show how far tradition has moved our hearts from him when they *constantly* talk and sing about “heaven” as our goal. In vain did my cousin Professor J.A.T. Robinson say from Cambridge, “Heaven in the Bible is nowhere the destination of the dying.” But is anyone taking him to heart? The popular mind is often unchecked either by scholars or in this

case by Rabbi Jesus! Jesus spoke always of the Christian reward and destiny as the “earth”: “How greatly are the meek to be congratulated: they are going to inherit the earth/land” (Matt. 5:5). The Good News Bible lost that precious promise in a very unfair and inaccurate paraphrase which obscured the words of Jesus: “Blessed are the meek; they will inherit what God has promised.” From brilliant clarity, “the earth, land” to hopeless vagueness! We need to know, and Jesus told us, what Christians are destined to inherit. God has not finished with this earth. He wants to restore it, and He will, through Jesus.

Loving Jesus includes loving what he said, his words. Otherwise we might well be charged by him with empty lip service. “You call me rabbi and lord,” Jesus said, “and you do well” (John 13:13). But do we “do well” if we do not **learn to think and speak like the rabbi we claim as lord**? Is Gnosticism, a pagan philosophy, the source of our habitual language in and out of church, or is Jesus? What we say constantly will teach us to think in a certain groove. What we say will be copied by our children. Only when the language of Jesus **about the Kingdom of God coming on earth** is reinstated and found on the Christians’ lips will the lesson have been learned. Meanwhile this magazine will persist undaunted in trying to get us to “sound like Jesus,” our master-Rabbi and Savior. Could Satan’s cleverest trick be to separate Jesus from his own matchless words?

Revelation 5:10 and Matthew 5:5 could well be placed on the refrigerator, as a daily reminder, until we learn to follow Jesus in his thinking and speaking. Better still our talented song-writers can lend their gifts to producing lyrics and beautiful melodies celebrating the glorious truths of Matthew 5:5 and Revelation 5:10 and even, with some creative ingenuity, Matthew 19:28: “You who have followed me, when the world is reborn, you will sit on thrones to administer the 12 tribes of Israel.” He was not speaking of strumming a harp on a cloud, nor with Billy Graham of “polishing rainbows, tending heavenly gardens and preparing heavenly dishes.” Jesus of course said also, “Whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this sinful and adulterous generation [society], of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels” (Mark 8:38).

Surely we need a whole new tradition of biblical words in our songs and sermons. We need to ease up on the “when I got saved” language (which is not wrong) and pay attention *also and mainly* to texts like Romans 13:11: “Salvation is now nearer to us than when we first believed” (not “further behind us”!). Salvation is mainly in the future in the New Testament. It is the goal of our present Christian struggle. We must persist to the end to be saved (Jesus in Matt. 24:13). Another hard text,

definite article before Jesus. It is called an anaphoric reference, i.e. pointing back to the true Jesus just described. John used the article for Jesus only here in this epistle. It was deliberate.

hardly preached: “Note then the kindness and severity of God: severity towards those who have fallen, but God’s kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness; otherwise you too will be cut off” (Rom. 11:22). How could this possibly match the popular but sentimental idea that “once saved,” one is “always saved”?

John 3:16 is a beautiful text of course, but by itself quite vague and unclear, if not buttressed by the rest of what John wrote and the rest of what Jesus said. Jesus also said, “He who hears my word and thus believes Him who sent me has moved from death to life, darkness to light” (John 5:24). But what does that mean? What is “my word”? What are we supposed to believe?

If one is reading “my word” as meaning a message *just* about Jesus dying for sins and rising, one is not understanding this text and many others. To find out about the “word, Gospel” Jesus preached and asked us to believe, we have to go to Matthew, Mark, and Luke. There in Matthew 13:19 we learn that “the word” is “the word *about the Kingdom of God*.” That is the critical issue — the Kingdom of God which is exactly the same as the Kingdom of Heaven (all based on Dan. 7:14, 18, 22, 27; cp. Isa. 52:7 for the Kingdom Gospel). “He who hears my word” therefore means “he who hears, understands, believes and obeys my Gospel/Message/Word concerning God’s Kingdom.” This is precisely the precious lesson given by Jesus in his critically important parable of the sower.

Ask your friends, did Jesus preach the Gospel? And then inquire about the content of the Gospel he preached. It was not about his death and resurrection *until late in his ministry* (Matt. 16:21). So the death and resurrection cannot be the whole Gospel.

What if you read a book in which a British author writes, “I am mad about my flat.” “Ah,” you think, “he must be infuriated about his flat tire.” But you would be quite wrong. What the Englishman means is “I am excited about my apartment!”

So with the Bible. If you think that “the God” (pronounced *o theos* in modern Greek), spoken of some 1300 times in the Greek New Testament as “the God” we are to worship and believe — if you think this is a triune God in three Persons, blessed Trinity, you are not thinking like Jesus. Jesus did not imagine that a triune God existed. He knew God as only the Father, and Him alone. How do we know this? How can we discover this in about two seconds? By believing and imitating the language of Jesus: “This is the life of the age, eternal life, that they come to know you, the only one who is truly God, and Jesus Christ whom you commissioned as your agent” (the meaning of “sent,” John 17:3). Jesus is there clearly distinguished and distinct from the “only one who is truly God.” God is the Father, who is one Person, not three. This is not so hard. Jesus said that “the Lord our God is *one* Lord” (Mark 12:29) and “one

Lord” does not mean “three Lords.” There you have it in all its beautiful simplicity. Paul loved that truth too: “There is for us one God, the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 8:4-6). How easily Paul could have written “there is for us one God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit,” but he nowhere wrote this. Nor does the New Testament ever say that God is comprised of three eternal Persons. The Father is always the One absolute God. Jesus is the man Mediator and Messiah (1 Tim. 2:5 is the best, easy summary of the creed). Jesus is Son of God because the spirit of God produced him, procreated him miraculously in the womb of his Davidic mother (Luke 1:35). Jews and Jesus were schooled in easy texts like “Do we not all have one Father? Has not one God created us?” (Mal. 2:10). The One God, here as thousands of times, is the Father, the one Yahweh.

When the Gospel of the Kingdom is defined as *firstly* news about the coming apocalyptic intervention of God who is going to send back His Son the Messiah, the New Testament immortality program will become clear. Everything points forward not to our individual moment of death but to the glorious arrival of the Messiah in the future. He is going to administer the first successful world government and is currently training and testing Christian believers to be part of that royal government. Seeking God “in spirit and truth” will involve seeking Him as “the only one who is truly God” (John 17:3) and doing this through the sole mediator, Jesus Christ, God’s accredited and unique agent.

Try this beautiful description of what Matthew meant by the Kingdom from a leading Oxford scholar. This ought to serve as a much-needed guide to all our thinking about the Kingdom. The Gospel as Jesus and Paul preached it is about the Kingdom and so an inaccurate understanding of the Kingdom leads automatically to an inaccurate Gospel:

“The Kingdom — **the central subject** of Christ’s doctrine. With this he began his ministry (4:17) and wherever he went he taught it as Good News [**Gospel**] (4:23). The Kingdom he taught was coming, but not in his lifetime. After his ascension he would come as Son of Man on the clouds of heaven (16:27; 19:28; 24:30; 25:31) and would sit on the throne of His glory...Then the twelve Apostles would sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (19:28). In the meantime he himself must suffer and die and be raised from the dead. How else could he come on the clouds of heaven? And the disciples were to **preach the Good News [Gospel] of the coming Kingdom** (10:7; 24:14) among all nations making disciples by baptism (28:19). The body of disciples thus gained would naturally form a society bound by common aims. Hence the disciples of the Kingdom would form a new spiritual Israel (21:43; [cp. Gal. 6:16])...In view of the needs of this new Israel of Christ’s disciples, who were to await his coming on the

clouds of heaven, it is natural that a large part of the teaching recorded in the Gospel should concern **the qualifications required in those who hoped to enter the Kingdom when it came...** Thus the parables convey some lesson about the nature of the Kingdom and the period of **preparation for it**. It should be sufficiently obvious that if we ask what meaning the parables had for the editor of the first Gospel, the answer must be that he chose them because...they taught lessons about the Kingdom of God *in the sense in which that phrase is used everywhere in the Gospel of the Kingdom which was to come, when the Son of Man came upon the clouds of heaven.*

“Thus the Parable of the Sower illustrates the varying **reception met with by the Good News [Gospel] of the Kingdom as it is preached amongst men**. That of the tares also deals not with the Kingdom itself, but with **the period of preparation for it**. At the end of the age, the Son of Man will come **to inaugurate his Kingdom...** There is nothing here nor elsewhere in this Gospel to suggest that **the scene of the Kingdom is other than the present world renewed, restored and purified.**”

The last sentence of our quotation makes the excellent point that Matthew (and the NT) does not expect believers to “go to heaven,” but that Jesus will come back to the earth to rule with them in a renewed earth. The perceptive reader of the New Testament will note the striking difference between the biblical view of the Kingdom, and thus of the Gospel of salvation, and what in post-biblical times was substituted for it: a departure of the faithful at death to a realm removed from the earth. The popular idea that the Kingdom is mainly a spiritual state of mind or lifestyle *now* is false to the New Testament. Joseph of Arimathea, a Christian, was “waiting for the Kingdom” after the ministry of Jesus (Mark 15:43). Luke 19:11-27 teaches us to connect the arrival of the Kingdom with the future return of Jesus (cp. above: “The Kingdom he taught was coming, but not in his lifetime”). “In Matthew [and in the NT] the Kingdom of God is conceived, **first of all, as something in the future.**” So say leading analysts of the Gospel records.

Try the outline model in this article as a summary of the Bible and see if your reading does not come alive in a new way. You and I are part of the greatest epic of all time, the drama by which God and Jesus plan to bring restoration, order and world peace to a now tortured earth. Satan is going to be bound so that his current, comprehensive policy of deception can no longer continue (2 Cor. 4:4; Rev. 12:9). Then the Kingdom of God, with Jesus and the saints of all the ages at the helm of government, will ensure peace and prosperity on a grand scale, never before experienced. “May Your Kingdom come and Your will be done on earth.” ✧

Beyond Reason

by Keith Relf, New Zealand

It is beyond God-given reason and biblical revelation, provided for us in logical language, to commit one’s intelligence and allegiance to a proposition that cannot be described with normal grammar and violates logic. To surrender to logical nonsense is the hallmark of deception as experienced by Eve. I am referring to the proposition that God is one and three at the same time. If the Father is Yahweh and Jesus is also Yahweh that makes two Yahwehs. But the Bible asserts that there is only one Yahweh.

Once we accept a proposition which defies the laws of language we automatically suspend our critical mental functions, in effect cauterizing our God-given capacity to think logically. This in turn allows us to read and discuss or imagine that we can resolve conflicting ideas while actually believing complete nonsense. And as Peter Berger wisely observed: “The capacity of people to accept evident nonsense increases, rather than decreases, with advanced education.” This strange tendency, I believe, comes about by doing what Jesus advised against — offering to other persons an attitude of undue intellectual awe. Being “star-struck” may simply demonstrate our own mental laziness or the fear of being different. Often fear of reprisal or rejection disables our intellectual integrity. Voltaire (1751) remarked, “It is dangerous to be right in matters on which the established authorities are wrong.”

Sometimes it is the sense of mystery that overwhelms and persuades us. On the doctrine of the Trinity, Tertullian, an early Christian theologian and moralist (150-c.225), said: “I believe because it is absurd.” Much later the brilliant mind of Isaac Newton gave us this comment on the Trinity: “The human race is prone to mysteries, and holds nothing so holy and perfect as that which cannot be understood.” He went on to say that he opted for biblical interpretations which “without straining reduce things to the greatest simplicity...Truth is ever to be found in simplicity, and not in the multiplicity and confusion of things.”

The wise British commentator Henry Alford, speaking of Luke’s report that Mary did not consummate her marriage *until* after the birth of her firstborn, noted how prejudice and preconception could block a reader’s understanding of the obvious: “The prima facie impression on the reader (Matt. 1:25) certainly is that ‘Joseph did not know her until...’ was confined to the period of time here mentioned...There is nothing in the scripture tending to remove that impression...On the whole it seems to me that no one would ever have thought of interpreting the verse any otherwise than in its prima facie meaning, except to force it into accordance with a preconceived notion of the perpetuity

of the virginity of Mary.” A billion Roman Catholics have been persuaded to twist this obvious fact and believe in the perpetual virginity and even sinlessness of Mary.

We might note that no one could have misunderstood John 17:3, “You, Father, [are] the only one who is truly God” until the Trinity concept intervened to destroy plain, logic and language.

The zeal some exhibit on behalf of a doctrine they admit they cannot explain is amazing. Trinitarian apologist Millard Erickson quotes: “Try to understand it [the Trinity] and you will lose your mind.” In contrast the Apostle Paul assured Timothy that “God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (2 Tim. 1:7). And, Peter said, God has given to us “all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who has called us to glory and virtue” (2 Pet. 1:3). Moses assures us that “The secret things belong to YHVH our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever” (Deut. 29:29). We must decide if our doctrine is indeed “revealed” or whether it is a convoluted construction based on post-biblical tradition.

Perhaps, as Paul did on Mars Hill, we might use some secular philosophy to help make our point. Arthur Schopenhauer said, “There is no opinion, however absurd, which men will not readily embrace as soon as they can be brought to the conviction that it is generally adopted.” Winston Churchill observed that “Most people, sometime in their lives, stumble across truth. Most jump up, brush themselves off, and hurry on about their business as if nothing had happened.” George Orwell said, “We have now sunk to a depth at which restatement of the obvious is the first duty of intelligent men.” Orwell said “obvious” not “obtuse.”

It is the purpose of this short writing to remind us that we need to evaluate what we hold as truth, and as Isaac Newton said of Scripture reading, “without straining, reduce things to the greatest simplicity... Truth is ever to be found in simplicity, and not in the multiplicity and confusion of things.” If the prophets, Jesus or the Apostles never mentioned the Trinity, how could it possibly be so important? Could the Bible writers, reading the words for God some 11,000 times, have believed in the triune God when not one of those 11,000 appearances of “God” ever meant the triune God?

Today most hold tenaciously to doctrines of doubtful provenance because they are constantly and sometimes threateningly endorsed by the pulpit, espoused by the academic elite, or hallowed by history and famous names. Few do as the noble Bereans. They took time to think and “searched the scriptures daily to see whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11). “Because of this,” Luke adds, “they became true

believers” (17:12). He commended and recommended their noble approach to truth.

Today, many are questioning the authority of those who claim “special knowledge.” Eminent and conservative theologians are pointing out the doctrinal errors that have been mainline orthodoxy for 1600 years. People who would “know their God” need to give heed and time to prayerfully examine what they think they believe. If in the process there is a wreckage of earlier “faith,” as is certainly very possible, there will be a great need for sound Biblical teaching to rebuild genuine faith replacing the indoctrination from which we have all suffered.

When we find out that our earlier conviction was neither biblical nor true, it may come as a devastating shock. Those who by the grace of God know better must prepare their hearts to be servants to the broken-hearted. Those who have loved theology, scholarship and the tradition of the Church more than the truth of God’s revelation in Scripture and who cannot conceive the possibility that they could be wrong, are in for a drastic rearrangement of their faith. It has been well said that when a man who is honestly mistaken hears the truth, he either ceases to be mistaken or he ceases to be honest. This may well be the choice for those honestly examining the creed of Jesus and the Trinity. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, in order to obtain an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled...*reserved* in heaven for you” (1 Pet. 1:3-4). One God, the Father. One man Messiah and one Gospel of the Kingdom.

That precious inheritance of the Kingdom will be ours when Jesus comes back to give us immortality and place us in his worldwide Kingdom on a renewed earth. In Jesus’ very Jewish mind, all the great things of the future are planned in advance in heaven by God. They will be revealed in the future on earth, with the return of the Messiah to sit on the restored throne of Israel. This great promise is lucidly simple and clear in Matthew 19:28. The apostles trained by Jesus and thoroughly understanding the Kingdom (Matt. 13:51; cp. Acts 1:3; Matt. 5:5; Rom. 4:13; Rev. 5:10) asked the appropriate “last question” in Acts 1:6: “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the Kingdom to Israel?” They were eagerly awaiting their Christian destiny in the Kingdom to come.

All this comes as a shock to those raised on a diet of “heaven” as a vague location for disembodied souls at death. Why not exchange all that “heaven” language for the Kingdom of God to come? And why not embrace the creed of Jesus that the Lord God is one Lord (Mark 12:29), and certainly not two or three. ✧

Comments (to celebrate the New Year)

“Thanks so much for your book *Jesus Was Not a Trinitarian*. I think of you and the *Focus on the Kingdom* magazine as a national treasure. I love reading these insights, which make the Bible come alive for me. I love searching for the truth and today it seems that there are few people who are willing to break free enough from unexamined tradition. I wonder what it will take to wake them up. Islam, perhaps?” — *Ohio*

“I again want to thank you for all of your articles on the website. Your site brings us back to the simple truth of Jesus and the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. I asked a friend who was raised as an orthodox Jew what he was taught because he studied scripture for years. I spoke to him about the Messiah and the Kingdom of God on earth to come and he said that was exactly what they were taught and are waiting for. He asked me why I don’t become Jewish, and I told him the true difference between what we believe is that I already have the Messiah — the historical Jesus — and when he comes again it will be his second coming. Praise God that I can be so honest and all of my Jewish friends are never offended. One of the hardest things for me, and I pray that God helps me with this, is all of the years of false teachings we have been submitted to. Even when you know that it is not true it is like a brainwashing and it takes a long time to get it out of the system. I am convinced now that the truth has set me free from the chains of lies taught unknowingly or otherwise. Thank you for all of your help. I will continue to read and study. I read the article on demons, spirit — I have seen them for years, since I was a little girl. My son told me he was wrestling with one on top of him that he could not see, and he was never taught about it, and I never spoke of any of this to him. That’s how I know that his experience was true. I have only been saved for just ten years — but my experiences as a child now show me that God already had His hand on my life. God is incredibly magnificent.” — *New York*

“I want to thank you for leading me to the truth through your writings and your audio and videos. I have been a Christian man for 26 years now. However the first 20 years I was a Trinitarian. Thankfully I came to the truth. The reason that I am writing you is that I need some of your wisdom and knowledge. There is a gentleman that I work with who is a unitarian too. But lately I think he is changing his view mainly because of the books that he has been reading. What can I do to help him?” — *Kansas*

“Thanks so much for your monthly newsletters. I am a strict monotheist and so are some others including my pastor, and it really makes sense to so many of the passages in the Scriptures. By the way our church was called Restoration Fellowship, which I found quite

interesting. There are very few people I can talk to because they condemn you for not believing in the Trinity. Can you please help me with Isaiah 9:6; I would like to understand that one. P.S. I have a Jewish friend who teaches the Bible as a subject in a public college, and she told me that Jesus never claimed to be God or equal to God.” — *e-mail*

“I want to extend my grateful appreciation to you for your dedication to the Kingdom work. Your ‘desire to make the best of Bible scholarship available to the wider churchgoing public’ through your books and pamphlets and other aids is truly appreciated.” — *Idaho*

“Greetings from Pakistan! I have been visiting your website for the last year. It has been a good spiritual experience. Your website helped me gain conviction in my faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. I am so much glad to share that this is the first time the knowledge and information in the Scripture has touched my heart, because all that I had been listening to was either superficial or had no Biblical background. I suppose that people study and teach the Scripture just as a mere reading from it, and not profoundly...

Thanks for a beautiful letter. You write fine English, too, and what you say here is just right — what we learned was superficial! We were all in that sad condition earlier.

The way you are preaching the word of God has touched my heart and purified my soul. I am moved to share the website with my friends and relatives and loved ones. I have also asked my friends to share the website with their loved ones, so the Scripture may be shared with as many people as is possible. I will be glad if these teachings are available in Urdu, Punjabi, Sindhi and Gujrati for the people of sub-continent, who really need to learn from the Word of God, and which make the major part of the world. I am a daily visitor to the website. I know there is your Trinity book in Urdu.” — *Pakistan*

“I just wanted to thank you so much for your *Focus* newsletter. I read through all of it each month. I clearly see the basic scriptural teaching on the person of God and of his son. I appreciate the explanations and insights into the Greek and Hebrew. I don’t have the background or education to extract the further understanding that you bring forth from these languages. I want to encourage you to keep up this good work that you are doing. I know that at times the external pressures can seem almost overwhelming. People can be relentless in their opposition. Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 15:58 are appropriate for us today. ‘Be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.’ I pray often for your ministry. God bless you.” — *Tennessee*

“Anthony, thank you for taking the time to respond to my queries. I will continue to examine the Scriptures and pray on these matters, and your responses have advanced my perspective, especially regarding praying. Yes, I am grateful to be free of the Trinitarian paradigm. I have always known inside that the Trinity was wrong, but until I came across your co-authored book *The Doctrine of the Trinity: Christianity’s Self-Inflicted Wound* I never had a way to break out of (shake-off) the mindset/bias I had acquired from traditional evangelical teaching on it and related issues. FYI: Robert Van Kampen’s work *The Sign* helped me have confidence in my rejecting of the popular *pre-trib* (secret) rapture theory a few years ago (and another area I cannot presently discuss openly where I teach). I shall get a copy of Greg Deuble’s book to read. The conference you mentioned sounds interesting. Schedule permitting, I shall make a concerted effort to attend.”

— *e-mail*

“What a compilation of challenging protocol! First, I was perusing your ABC website and the various links and came across your dissertation on the subject of the rapture. Again, I’ve never found a better treatment of the subject. I’ve now changed my view from pre- to post-thanks to you. What becomes apparent is that a third or less of all Christians have no knowledge of the subject at all; a third or less of all Christians who do embrace the pre-trib rapture for the reasons you put forth in your book are not equipped to defend with scripture the reason for their belief and will rely on supposition and misapplication of their given arsenal of Bible passages; and a third or less are awakening to a post-trib position, as I am, and require a resource of sound and convincing scriptural exegesis to put the spotlight on what the Bible actually teaches on the subject. Why I feel I can rely on your theological and practical positions is that you have scoured the pan so thoroughly that it becomes nigh impossible to poke holes in your arguments. God has certainly given you a remarkable gift, and I’m blessed to have discovered (or perhaps been led to) your works. Of course, as you have surely found, the opposition to change on matters of faith and belief can become inflammatory. My Baptist friends will not even discuss the subject because their denomination has given a clear position on pre-trib so the matter is settled. Pat Robertson of the 700 Club is mid-trib.

“I had a thought regarding promotion of your treatise to pre-trib pastors across the country. Capture their email addresses. Send them a challenging email inviting them to review their position on the rapture and give them a teaser portion of your booklet. Then invite them to order a complete Biblical treatment of the subject (your book) to be accompanied with a study guide to assist the reader in establishing for himself the true position of Scripture on the subject. If they are not

convinced or satisfied, they may ask for a complete refund. For those who make the purchase, you could follow up a month later with a value-added questionnaire asking the reader to answer a set of questions, to evaluate the presented material with their own critical statements, and to pose further questions they would like answered.” — *e-mail*

“My name is Lukas Bilek. I’m from Prague, Czech Republic. I’m 38; I have been an evangelical Christian for 18 years and from the beginning I had a problem with Trinity doctrine. During the last 7 years I was arguing about this doctrine with my elders; I wrote an essay about it but I didn’t know anybody who would see God and Jesus the same way I did. Recently I found your web page and your book *The Doctrine of the Trinity: Christianity’s Self-Inflicted Wound* and your view of God and Christ which is very close to my understanding (with one exception — I still believe in Christ’s pre-existence).

I suggest that you think about “preexistence.” Can you really be human if you are an angel? Luke 1:35 and 2 Samuel 7:14 are not so hard.

“For the last 3 years I’ve been studying theology at the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Prague (Trinitarian). For the next 2 years I’ll be working on my dissertation; my professor agreed that the topic of it will be criticism of the Trinity doctrine. Your book and your arguments helped me a lot to be strengthened in my position. I would like to use a lot of your arguments in my dissertation (I’ll quote the source :-).

Thanks and by all means use any of our sources and ref. them as you would anyway for any such work. It is all public information.

“The main reason I write you is that I don’t know anybody in the Czech Republic who would like to spread this idea of one God and one Lord. BUT your book was translated into the Czech language, so there must exist somebody like me here. We (I have a wife and 2 kids) would like to be involved in the work of restoration of the right teaching in this important subject and we are even thinking of founding a fellowship based on the truth in this matter. My first priority now is to give a testimony to truth in this theological seminary but later we may start a fellowship. Thank you for your time and let me know, please.” — *Czech Republic*

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