

# Focus on the Kingdom

Vol. 13 No. 3

Anthony Buzzard, editor

December, 2010

## Please Watch the Debate

In September of this year, Barbara and I traveled to Phoenix at the kind invitation of Jewish Voice, who have a fine TV studio. The occasion was to be a lengthy discussion on the age-old question about who Jesus is and who the Father is — and the relation of the two to each other. At present the dominant, traditional understanding of God is, of course, that He is a complex-unity Being, “One God existing eternally in three Persons.” This dogma was arrived at after centuries of post-biblical argument and controversy. In 381, at the Council of Constantinople, one of many church councils, the “orthodox” and thus only acceptable view of the identity of Jesus was confirmed. Jesus the Son of God was “brought into existence (begotten) eternally, before all worlds.” In the language of the so-called “church fathers” of that time the Son had “a beginningless beginning.” He was “eternally generated.” (I note that my spell checker is unwilling to recognize the word “beginningless”! The spell checker is wiser perhaps than many churchgoers who seem to take on board their church’s creed without much question.)

With great candor, and revealing the essential incoherence of this creedal definition of the Son as “eternally begotten,” a contemporary theologian writes: “It is doubtful what content we can assign to the notion of eternal generation” (McCleod, *The Person of Christ*). John Milton, one of the greatest literary talents of all time, was less polite. He pointed to the extreme difficulty, indeed incoherence, of “eternal begetting.” “Him whom the Father begat from all eternity He still begets. He whom He still begets is not yet begotten and therefore is not yet a Son [!]; for an action which has no beginning can have no completion” (*On the Son of God and the Holy Spirit*, p. 80).

The awful problem — may we suggest mindless idea — of an “eternally begotten Son,” the pillar of traditional Trinitarian belief, is that it posits a second eternal Person alongside God the Father. The Bible is surely transparent in its warnings against such a dangerous idea.

The debate in Phoenix was expertly directed by Jonathan Bernis, President of Jewish Voice. Excerpts were later aired on the huge television networks, with millions of viewers worldwide. It can only be a blessing that the public, wanting to serve God and Jesus in truth (John 4:24), have been exposed to the great issues of God and His Son. How is the universe constituted? Who is the Son? These are the really big questions affecting us all.

We seem to spend much energy and time on lesser issues. But these are matters of truth and spiritual integrity, and above all of Scriptural fact. Who in the Bible is Jesus? Who is the Savior? And who is his God?

Our opponents in the discussion were Drs. James White and Michael Brown, both of whom have widely exposed radio programs of their own. They seemed keen to warn us of our “heretical stance.” They have of course, as do we, every right to their opinions, in our blessedly free environment. I was accompanied by Hebrew roots Christian, Joseph Good

Those who watch this long dialogue (“Deity of Messiah” debate at [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)) will notice one interesting fact. Conspicuous by its absence was any detailed discussion of Luke’s and Matthew’s long accounts of how the Son came into existence (you would expect that data to be primary in a debate about the Son and who he is). As someone observed it was on the side of our debate partners something of a “John show.” Nearly every text produced was from John’s Gospel, and none from the early chapters of Matthew and Luke.

If you are keen to sharpen your thinking on these great issues of how the universe is constituted, do go also to my 10-minute video at YouTube, entitled “Jesus Is Still a Jew.” For the past months I have been writing, almost daily, a relevant point in the discussion about the identity of God and Jesus. You may find these reflections valuable as you engage others (is this not part of the Great Commission?) in discussion at every opportunity. It really does matter that we define God and the Son scripturally.

Within the past few days, our “hits” at the “Jesus Is Still a Jew” video have leapt from about 10 per day to hundreds per day! Is this because of the excerpts of the debate aired on TBN and other huge networks? It may be that we are returning to a situation like the one noted by one church father in the 5<sup>th</sup> century. He observed that in every local shop the discussion was centered on theological issues relevant to God and the Son. The debate was fast and furious and ended tragically with a fierce dogma, backed by church and state. The official Trinitarian view of God was written in stone. Dissenters risked everything. In later centuries that dogma was used to excommunicate, banish and even put to death those who “begged to differ.”

The classic case was the brutal murder of Michael Servetus, who died aged 42 in 1553. He was cruelly burned at the stake at the instigation of an unrepentant

John Calvin, the leading “reformer.” His death resulted from his refusal to accept that the Son of God is “the eternal Son of God.” For Servetus the issue was one of eternal truth. The Son, he said, originated in Mary and was not a second Person of a triune God.

But is the average churchgoer even aware of the violent history which led to the enforcement of the traditional dogma that God is one in three Persons, that God’s unity is “complex”? And all this despite Jesus’ declaration of his own Jewish and Christian creed that “the Lord our God is one Lord.” The word “one” simply means in Greek and Hebrew “one single,” just exactly as it does in English. The popular but completely erroneous idea that “one” implies “more than one” must rank as one of the most pernicious and obviously false pieces of information ever foisted on an unsuspecting public. Does “one tripod” mean that one really means three, or “one centipede” that one really means a hundred?! Is your purchase at the “dollar store” really compound one, i.e. two or more dollars? Please give this some earnest thought and join the campaign to disabuse your neighbors of the insidious suggestion that “one” means “more than one” (i.e. three) when describing God!

If you listen to the debate you will hear Dr. Brown claim that “one” means “complex unity.” You will hear him assert that though God has been seen by no one, nevertheless the Son of God appeared as one of the three “men” who met Abraham in Genesis 18. This is odd. If Jesus is supposed to “be God,” and “no one has seen God at any time” how can they have seen the Son of God, whom they claim IS God?

Dr. White produced on his computer a copy of a section of the Dead Sea Scrolls version of Isaiah. This manuscript of course, as we all know, had no vowel points in it. The Hebrew in other words reads rather like BRDS NST (bird’s nest). Or humorously “YR DMB F Y CNT RD THS.” It is of course well-known that the vowel points now found in all the Hebrew manuscripts were added to the text only around 600-800 AD. Dr. White then attempted to suggest that we ought to doubt whether Psalm 110:1 is accurate in the Hebrew manuscripts as we now have them. The second “lord” in that Psalm 110:1, which is the key to the whole issue of the relationship of the Messiah/Son to the One God, Yahweh, is the word ADONI in Hebrew (pronounced ADONEE). That word is found 195 times in the Old Testament and never refers to God. It is invariably a non-Deity title. There is a similar but different word (439 times) for the Lord GOD — the word ADONAI (rhymes with El Shaddai). Never forget the human/Deity distinction between ADONEE and ADONAI.

God is a God of detail and what we are discussing here is vital public information. Is the second “lord” of Psalm 110:1 (don’t forget that this psalm is alluded to

and appealed to over and over again in the NT) the word for God or the word for an elevated human being? Is the Messiah supposed to *be* GOD, creating the later problem of the Binity and Trinity, or is he the human but virginally begotten Son of God?

Dr. White wants to raise doubts about whether the word in Psalm 110:1 is really ADONI, a human lord — or should it really be ADONAI, the Lord God? The difference is one of vowel pointing. Could it be, Dr. White wants us to ask, that the Jews later misrepresented that second lord by altering the vowels? Could it be that Jews wanted to destroy “the Deity” of Jesus?

The Hebrew texts of Psalm 110:1 are not mistaken. We have plenty of checks and balances and confirming witnesses to the truth of the word ADONI, a human, non-Deity, person in that fascinating Psalm 110:1. In verse 3 of that psalm there are many Hebrew manuscripts which read as follows: “From the womb I have begotten you.” Here we have a genuine reason for considering another reading, since there are lots of Hebrew manuscripts which show that alternative reading.

The Greek version of the Hebrew Bible was often quoted by the inspired NT writers of Scripture. The Greek OT, the LXX, also reads in Psalm 110:3 “I have begotten you.” It may well be a wonderful reference to the virginal begetting in Mary. And it is very likely that in this verse, not verse 1, some of the Jewish scribes did try to hide the truth about the begetting of the Messiah, by pointing the Hebrew differently. On this issue (Ps. 110:3) we have plain evidence of alteration. For Psalm 110:1 (ADONI) we have none at all. In fact we have the NT confirmation that “my lord” (small letter “l”) which translates ADONI is correct. The Greek Scriptures tell us that “my lord” is indeed the right translation of ADONI. Psalm 110:1 certainly reads “the LORD said to my lord” (not Lord God).

You can check this carefully using standard Bible software. The phrase “to my lord” (as in “the LORD says **to my lord**”) appears 11 times in the OT Hebrew, and on no occasion does it reflect the Hebrew ADONAI, which would be to “the Lord,” not to “my lord.” So why suggest a mistake in Psalm 110:1? It is because Trinitarians are embarrassed by the non-Deity title given to the Messiah (ADONI). This does not fit with the cherished idea that the Son *is* Yahweh, part of a triune God.

It is a fact that God in the NT is never called “my lord,” and “my God” refers only to the God of Jesus, the One God. You will remember that Elizabeth was excited to be visited by the mother of “my lord” (Luke 1:43). (Note, not “the mother of my GOD”!)

I can hear an objection: Is not Jesus called “my God” in John 20:28? Not if you deal fairly with John’s gospel. John wrote his whole book (including 20:28) to prove that Jesus is “the Christ, the Son of God” (20:31). Did he then

undermine his own purpose by asking us to believe that Jesus is actually GOD (making 2 Gods)? This would be astonishing since in those first-century days no one imagined that the “the Lord’s anointed,” “the Messiah” would be the LORD Himself! Jesus is both “the Lord Messiah” (Luke 2:11) and “the LORD’s Messiah” (2:26).

In John 20:28 Thomas finally sees what he earlier in chapter 14 could not see, that “if you have seen Jesus you have seen God” and that “the Son was in the Father and the Father in the Son.” How very reasonable, then, that John resolves Thomas’ hang-up. Thomas finally comes to the realization of who Jesus truly is. He declares: “My lord (Messiah) and my God (the Father).” The sentence in Greek reads here “my lord and my God,” not “my lord and God.” Thomas finally sees the Father (God) in the Son (Jesus). This brings Thomas to the clear belief he was slow to grasp. Thomas got the point.

But Thomas has not taken a leap several centuries ahead and become an orthodox Trinitarian! I am reminded of the powerful remark of a colleague Bible Professor who says of “The evolution of the Trinity”: “No responsible New Testament scholar would claim that the doctrine of the Trinity was taught by Jesus or preached by the earliest Christians or consciously held by any writer of the NT. It was in fact slowly worked out in the course of the first few centuries in an attempt to give an intelligible doctrine of God.”<sup>1</sup> ✧

## Back to Luke 1:35

A useful place to begin discussion about God and Jesus with friends is to ask them to start not with John but with the beginning of Luke, where a solid and clear definition of the meaning of Son of God is given. You may want to throw in, too, the wonderfully liberating declaration of the current professor of Systematic Theology at Fuller Seminary: “To be called Son of God in the Bible means you are not God.”

I was involved in some email discussion with one of the multitudes of websites. I had asked:

Sirs, In your discussion of the begetting of Jesus did you deal with the very straightforward statement in Luke 1:35 that Jesus is the Son of God **precisely because** (*diokai*) of the miracle in Mary? The activity of God the Father is clear: “The holy spirit comes over Mary,” and “for that reason exactly the one to be begotten [brought into existence] will be called the Son of God.” Is this not a very clear explanation of how, why and when Jesus was the Son of God? Could one possibly misunderstand this?

The aged Elizabeth had been “called barren” meaning that she was indeed barren, so calling Jesus Son of God means that this is what he is. Compare “you will be

called sons of God” = “you will **be** sons of God” (Matt 5:9 and Luke 6:35).

If so what is all this at your site about “eternal begetting”? Such language is alien to Scripture.

Luke 1:35 along with Matthew 1:20 place the beginning, that is the begetting of Jesus, the Son of God, in the womb of Mary. That is where the Son comes into existence.

“That which is begotten [fathered, brought into existence] in her is from the spirit of God” (Matt. 1:20).

Have you dealt with this simple data in detail, also the “genesis” of the Son in Matthew 1:18? The word here in the Greek, *genesis*, is the same word which names the first book of the Bible and the same word as found in Matthew 1:1: the family history, the lineage (*genesis*) of Jesus Christ.

This seems very straightforward and is vastly removed from the later fearful complications of “theology” in regard to essence, *ousia* (Being) hypostases, and two natures. ✧

## Explaining the Trinity

### A Candid Admission

by Brad Haugaard, [bibletranslator.com](http://bibletranslator.com)

Though I firmly believe it, the doctrine of the Trinity has always confused me, and I suspect it has been a major source of misunderstanding between Christians and those of other religions.

First we Christians say that there is one God and only one God and there never has been more than one God and there never will be more than one God. Which all seems pretty clear to everybody. But then we turn around and start saying that the Father is God and the Son is God and the Holy Spirit is God.

At which our befuddled listener may ask...

Are Father, Son, and Holy Spirit just different names for the one and only God?

Uh, no, we say. They are all separate persons.

Do you mean Father, Son and Holy Spirit are three parts of the one God?

No. All three are fully God. You can’t divide God into parts.

This, of course, is likely to cause a first class case of confusion, or worse, give the impression that somewhere along the line we’ve been lying.

I have heard people try to explain away this confusion, but I’ve never heard a good explanation until recently, when I came upon one by Anselm — long-time-ago archbishop of Canterbury — that I thought was quite good.

Interestingly, Anselm’s argument for the Trinity relies upon the strongest affirmation that there is only one unchanging, eternal, indivisible, supreme God.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. A.T. Hanson, Professor of Theology, University of Hull, *The Image of the Invisible God*, SCM Press, 1982.

God, Anselm says, cannot be divided into parts. Why? Because if you divided God into *equal* parts, he wouldn't be supreme. Supreme means "above all else," so if God had an equal — or equals — he wouldn't be supreme. Only one can be supreme. But maybe you could divide God into *unequal* parts; say, 70 percent and 30 percent? Doesn't work. 70 percent of infinity is infinity. 30 percent of infinity is infinity. And infinity equals infinity, so you're back to having equal parts. If God is supreme and infinite, he simply cannot be divided.

Nor, he adds, can God be added to. (Infinity plus a billion is what? Yup, still infinity.)

So, with that in mind, let's start with a question:

Can you imagine yourself?

Perhaps you saw yourself in the bathroom mirror this morning and can remember what you look like. You know how tall you are and how much you weigh and your beliefs and that your toenails need clipping. So if you close your eyes perhaps you can imagine yourself. Roughly.

Now consider God. Could God imagine himself? Of course! And not only could he imagine himself, he could imagine himself perfectly. But what would a perfect image of God be? A picture on the wall? A 3-D model? A spreadsheet of data about God? An angel. No. If God perfectly imagined Himself, the image would be...God. Anything less would be an imperfect image.

Does this mean there are two Gods? Nope. There can't be. Infinity plus infinity is still infinity. Also, if God were to imagine himself as separate from himself, then his image of himself would be imperfect, because he is not separate from himself.

And so there you have the Father (the one imagining) and the Son (the one being imagined). Each of them is fully God, yet each is a different person.

Mind-twisting? Absolutely. But then so are a bunch of modern scientific notions, such as the curvature of space and the nature of light and the idea of electrons jumping from one orbit to another without passing through the intervening space and a bunch of other stuff. So get over it.

Okay, onward.

Between the Father and the Son there is also a relationship — a spirit, a *Holy Spirit*.

One might be tempted to say this relationship, or Holy Spirit, is a *part* of the Father and the Son, or a *part* of God, just as you might say that a relationship you have is a part of your life. But remember, God cannot be divided into parts.

So this relationship is not a *part* of God; it *is* God.

Thus we have the Father (who in our illustration imagines himself), we have the Son (the one who is imagined), and we have the Holy Spirit (the relationship

between the Father and Son). One God — Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

In closing, a comment.

First, someone might say, "If the Father imagined the Son and the Holy Spirit resulted, doesn't that mean the Father came first?" No. God made time; he is not subject to it. "Before" and "after" and "first" and "second" and such terms have no meaning in regard to God. Also, Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all God, not parts of God. They all have the same infinite span of existence. ✧

*Editor's reaction: Much easier to bow to the simple explanations of the Bible, especially in Matthew and Luke!*

## Reasons That Jesus Is Not in View in Proverbs 8

by Ray Faircloth, England

For most of my life I lived with the understanding that Jesus pre-existed and that Proverbs chapter 8:22-31 could be used to prove that understanding. Some eight years ago I was presented, by the Restoration Fellowship, with information that showed that Proverbs 8:22-31 could be understood differently, i.e. that the "wisdom" spoken of there was not a personalizing of a pre-human spirit being (later born as Jesus) who acted as creator or agent of the creation described in Genesis 1; but rather "Wisdom" was simply being personified as a lady. So I was no longer able to use this passage as one of the proof-texts for a pre-existent Jesus. Since that time I have discovered that there are many small groups of Christians with diverse beliefs on various biblical subjects, but who all understand the "Wisdom" of Proverbs 8:22-31 as being personified and that it was never meant to be applied to Jesus as a pre-existent person, or to put it another way — he did not have a pre-human existence.

But isn't it true that 1 Corinthians 1:24, 30 and Colossians 2:3 indicate that we should interpret Proverbs 8:22-31 as a reference to a pre-existing Jesus who acted in the Genesis creation?

These texts read from the ESV: "Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God...And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, **who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification** and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:24, 30); and Christ "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:3). This sounds like Paul is linking Jesus with the "wisdom" of Proverbs 8, doesn't it?

But a little thought may make us draw back from that conclusion. For example 1 Corinthians 1:30 also says that Jesus becomes "righteousness and sanctification." So are we expected to come to the conclusion that whenever we see these words in the rest of the Scriptures it is speaking of Jesus? Hardly! So this too must be true of the

word *wisdom*. We will not automatically think that, whenever we see the word “wisdom” in a Scripture, it must mean Jesus. Furthermore, the synoptic parallel accounts of Luke 11:49/Matthew 23:34 show God’s wisdom is not a second person but God Himself. Luke tells us that “**the wisdom of God** said, ‘I will send them prophets’” (Luke 11:49). However, the parallel in Matthew says, “Therefore **I [God]** send you prophets” (Matt. 23:34).

Additionally, I recently purchased *The New American Commentary*, Volume 14 on Proverbs and discovered even further reasons why 1 Corinthians 1:24, 30 should not be used to interpret the Wisdom of Proverbs 8:22-31 as being a pre-human Jesus. It states:

“Perhaps the strongest argument for taking Prov. 8 to be an Old Testament portrait of Christ is 1 Cor. 1:24, where Paul calls Christ ‘The wisdom of God.’ Close examination of the text, however, reveals that Paul’s description of Christ is **not an allusion to Prov. 8** and that it provides no basis for interpreting Proverbs in this way.

“First, **Paul’s purpose in 1 Cor. 1:24 is not to point to Old Testament texts that relate to Christ** but to address the scandal of the cross. In particular he faces the issue of the offense created when he proclaims that the crucified Jesus is the Son of God and Savior of the World. To the Greeks this is sheer folly. When he says that Christ is the wisdom of God, **he means it functionally in the sense that the crucified Christ is God’s profound way of salvation** despite whatever human reason might think of the idea. He also calls Christ the Power of God in the same verse in response to Jews who expect the Messiah to come in overwhelming power.

“Second, **it is not appropriate to take Paul’s comment and make it the interpretive grid for an Old Testament text to which Paul made no allusion whatsoever**. Similarly, one should not take a text that describes the power of God (e.g., Ps. 78:4 ff) and claim that it is really a description of Christ on the basis of 1 Cor. 1:24. It would be as if one were to take 1 John 4:8 (“God is love”) and on that basis claim that 1 Cor. 13 is really intended to be read as a description of God” (p. 112).

Prior to my reading of this commentary I also realized that Jesus could not be linked to Proverbs 8 because Luke tells us that Jesus “went on progressing in wisdom” (Luke 1:52). This hardly gives a picture of someone who had all of God’s wisdom so as to create the universe and so shows that he was not in view in Proverbs 8.

But what of the fact that verses 22-24 of Proverbs 8 speak of “Wisdom” as coming into existence? Surely God has always had his wisdom with him so that it has always

existed! Absolutely! Clearly God has always had wisdom. So how are we to understand it when “Wisdom” says: “The LORD possessed me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of old. Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth. When there were no depths I was brought forth”? Again *The New American Commentary* is helpful:

“Finally, Woman Wisdom of Proverbs 8 does not personify an attribute of God but personifies an attribute of creation. She is a personification of the structure, plan, or rationality that God built into the world. She is created by God and fundamentally an attribute of God’s universe” (p. 113).

So it appears that **the specific wisdom described in Proverbs 8 is God’s creative purpose and plan**, i.e. His “word” working in creation and which was produced at a particular point in ancient time, i.e. was “brought forth.” Nevertheless, Jesus was not “brought forth” until his birth from Mary. Therefore, Jesus clearly is not in this Proverbs 8 picture of wisdom.

So who produced the Genesis creation according to Proverbs? We don’t need to look far because that answer is right within the Proverbs 8 passage where we find statements showing that Yahweh Himself was the actual maker of the Genesis creation. According to verses 26 to 29 it was: “When **He** [Yahweh] had not yet **made the earth**...When **He** established the heavens...When **He** inscribed a circle on the face of the deep. When **He** made firm the skies above...**He** marked out the foundations of the earth” (NASB).

It is the context and the proper understanding of the type of language used in Proverbs, i.e. personification, that help one to properly understand this passage which is evidently not speaking of a literal person. ✧

## What is “Therefore” There For?

A vital key to understanding what Jesus meant in Matthew 24, the great discourse on end-time events, is provided by Matthew 24:15. Jesus had just stated in verse 14 the astonishing truth that “this Gospel about the Kingdom must be preached among all the nations, and then the **end** will come.” The end in question is of course the end of the present evil age, when the Kingdom of God will replace all current nation-states and peace will prevail across the globe as the Messianic Kingdom, managed by the returning Jesus and the saints of all the ages (Dan. 7:18, 22, 27). Having predicted in verse 14 the international propagation of the Gospel of the Kingdom (the saving Christian Gospel, Mk. 1:14-15, Luke 4:43, Acts 8:12, 19:8, 20:24-25, 28:23, 31), Jesus went on to say: “When you **therefore** see the Abomination of Desolation standing in a holy place

[Mark 13:14, standing where **he** ought not to]<sup>2</sup> (let the reader understand) then flee.”

What is the “**therefore**” there for? It connects the END of the age (v. 14) with the Abomination of Desolation. The sense is: “consequently, when you see...” The real sign that the end of the age is upon us is given by these precious words, in reply to the disciples’ initial question: “What will be the sign of your **coming** and the **end** of the age?” (Matt. 24:3). The logical connector “therefore,” inextricably linking the end of the age with the appearance of the Abomination, has been abandoned by some systems which misread Matthew 24 and try to apply much of it to AD 70, which of course was neither the end of the age nor the Second Coming.

Another “**therefore**,” in Luke 1:35, is equally vital to sound understanding. It establishes the logical connection between the amazing miracle in Mary and the procreation of the **Son of God**, Jesus. Mary, as we know, conceived her (and God’s) firstborn Son without the benefit of a human husband! Gabriel, whose logic was impeccable, said to Mary, “Holy Spirit [the divine operational presence and power of God] will come over you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you: **therefore** indeed (*dio kai*) the one to be begotten [brought into existence] will be called holy, the **Son of God**.”

With this brilliantly illuminating utterance of Gabriel millennia of false tradition about an “eternally begotten Son” will come tumbling down and clarity will be restored to the simple-minded and trusting believer. ✧

## Inside Out

**S**ome Bible readers are plagued, because of denominational tradition, to read in a “topsy-turvy” manner, or rather with a confusion about “inside” and “outside.”

Was Jesus tempted in the wilderness from within or from outside? An amazing piece of biblical misunderstanding, causing totally unwarranted division, arose in the 1850s when some Bible readers proposed that Jesus was tempted from within himself. This mistake was built on the prior error of supposing that Satan (actually in the Greek “**the** [well-known] Satan or Devil”) was not a personage external to man, but just another way of speaking of the evil tendency of human nature. This became a fixed and unshakable dogma in one denomination, such that dissenters were forbidden to break bread, i.e. take communion, if they believed that THE Satan or THE Devil was a fallen supernatural being external to man.

<sup>2</sup> Note the masculine participle which gives personality to the Abomination, the final wicked person. See modern commentaries and the RV, and other translations like Weymouth or NEB.

This issue is easily resolved by paying attention to simple words. In Matthew 4, Mark 1 and Luke 4, the Satan, the Devil, the Adversary “approached Jesus.” That is, he came up to Jesus, went towards Jesus, evidently from outside Jesus and not from within Jesus. Greek and English are explicitly clear on this point. The verb used is *proserchomai* which means “to go towards, to approach, to go up to.” Later in Matthew 4:11 the angels “approached Jesus” (same Greek word). Does anyone really believe that the angels came from within Jesus? On no account could Matthew 4 possibly mean that evil thoughts proceeded from within Jesus! Jesus anyway, as sinless, did not dream up twisted forms of Scripture. It was the external Devil or Satan who suggested these from outside Jesus.

On such amazingly convoluted misreadings, whole denominations have been built and they seriously divide and fragment the faith.

Did Mary take in a baby from OUTSIDE herself? Did the Son of God, or, according to the Trinitarian theory, GOD the SON, reduce himself to a fetus and come INTO Mary from the outside? The biblical story in Matthew is expressly against such an idea. But the notion that GOD the SON came *into* Mary from *outside* and was transformed into a baby became fixed dogma in Christianity from around 150 AD and has remained a pillar of “orthodox” belief in the Trinity. Matthew provides just the corrective we need. He reports the angel as reassuring Joseph: “That which is begotten **in** her is from the holy spirit” (Matt. 1:20). In other words Mary had conceived **in** her womb, by miracle, the Son of God.

Do foods go INTO the heart or do they pass through the body without adversely polluting the inside of man, his heart? Jesus observed that foods, defined in the Law of Moses (Lev. 11) as clean and unclean, cannot affect the really important interior of man, his heart. They enter the man from outside but pass out of his body. “Thus,” Mark observed in an editorial comment, “Jesus cleansed all foods” (Mark 7:19). Paul echoed the same view when he observed that “nothing is unclean unless you think it is unclean...all things are clean” (Rom. 14:14, 20). This is very different from the strict prohibitions of Leviticus 11. Paul has taken the very word *akathartos*, “unclean, non-clean” from Leviticus 11 and reversed it: *katharos*, clean. This is all part of Paul’s mature Christian view that we are not under the law but within the Torah of Messiah (1 Cor. 9:21), who introduced the New Covenant. Paul warned that any insistence on physical circumcision as having religious value means that we would have “to keep the whole Law” (Gal. 5:3). Christian readers of the Bible need to define what that “whole law” is which we do not now have to keep!

For Paul it was a defection from Christ to fall back into Moses. He struggled for much of his ministry with a

mistaken “Jewish” influence which could not seem to grasp that Christianity is not just a copy of Moses. Yes, the God of Israel is the same God of all believers, but the faith itself is a new system, since the Law was added until the seed (Christ) came (see Gal. 3:23-29). The temporary custodial guide was replaced by the Messiah’s Torah summed up as the law of love. The law contained only a shadow of the reality which came with Jesus (Heb. 8:5, 10:1). Thus even the calendar of Israel, summed up often in the OT as “annual feasts, monthly new moons, and weekly Sabbath,” what John calls the “the feasts of the Jews,” are a shadow of things to come. Adam indeed “**is** a shadow/type” of the one to come (Rom. 5:14). Jesus of course has replaced that shadow. The present tense “is” implies in the case of Adam that he **was** the shadow. The calendar in the same way **was** in its very nature “a single shadow” of Christ who has come. The reality foreshadowed by the calendar is peace, rest, and continued “feasting” in Christ, who “is our Passover.” No wonder then that Paul wrote “Let us therefore be feasting [a continuous feast]...with the unleavened bread of genuineness and truth” (1 Cor. 5:8).

He also urged his churches to break bread and drink a little wine in memorial of the death of Jesus, not once a year but in connection with church meetings, the frequency not necessarily being mandated, though he speaks of “when you come together as a church” (1 Cor. 11:18, 20). ✧

### “A complete destruction, one which is decreed” — Connect the Dots

The following four verses of Scripture are immensely instructive. They are linked by a common phrase, which is found *nowhere else* in the Bible. They describe a final swift and complete destruction of evil which will occur when Jesus returns at the day of the Lord to execute judgment on a wicked world.

Isaiah 10:23: “For a **complete destruction, one that is decreed**, the Lord GOD of hosts will execute in the midst of the whole land.”

Isaiah 28:22: “And now do not carry on as scoffers, or your fetters will be made stronger; for I have heard from the Lord GOD of hosts **of decisive destruction on all the earth.**”

Daniel 9:27: “And he [a wicked ruler] will make a firm covenant with the many for one week [seven], but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a **complete destruction, one that is decreed**, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.”

Romans 9:28: “For the Lord will execute his word on the earth, thoroughly and quickly.” (Hebrew NT: “For a

**complete destruction, one that is decreed**, the Lord will execute on the earth.”)

Paul here in Romans 9:28 quotes the Greek version of the verses listed above. He has in mind the very texts in Isaiah and Daniel which describe the final and definitive cutting short of evil by a “decisive destruction, one that is decreed” (*kalah v’necheratzah*). Paul, as we see, reads the 70th week (seven) of Daniel 9:27 as ending not in AD 33, much less in AD 70, but in the future when Jesus arrives at the end of the age. Isaiah 10:23, 28:22, Daniel 9:27 and Romans 9:28 are bound together with the same phrase about a complete, swift and final destruction. ✧

## Comments

“I feel compelled to compliment you on the work you have accomplished via your site and I am sure, in all other walks of your life also. I feel inspired and uplifted by your 2 video presentations — as much as anything because of the extraordinary clarity of perspective that is so enthusiastically imparted concerning Jesus’ primary role and mission — the manifestation of the Kingdom of God. I cannot imagine a point being made more clearly, comprehensively and accessibly than the way you throw light on the core issues surrounding Jesus’ religious stance and position, his public life, his Message — his Good News [about the Kingdom]! I feel that my life-focus has been renewed and clarified and I must thank you for that.” — *England*

“I came across Anthony Buzzard’s books at Amazon and started discussing the topic of Yeshua, Son of God, with a friend who told me about Greg Deuble. Yeshua’s divinity is a topic that has kept me sitting on the fence in my beliefs for quite a few years. I keep on placing it on the back burner time and time again, because I am not clearly able to gain a good enough understanding of Yeshua’s place and position in the scheme of things. I’m at a point where I just want to settle the matter once and for all and I am hoping I can find some help through yours and Greg’s teachings.” — *Australia*

“I just finished watching the ‘highlights’ of the debate between James White, Michael Brown and you on **Jewishvoice.org** I just want to commend you on the composure and dignity you showed while faced with the arrogance and pride that was displayed by the men across the table from you. You did a wonderful job, as always, pointing out the common sense of Scriptures. Too bad it falls on deaf ears at the table, but perhaps many who watched the debate will look into the topic further. Do keep up the good work!” — *Ohio*

“I want to tell you how much I appreciate your zeal for the entire Gospel. You are our Pastor, even though we are separated by many miles.” — *Panama*