

# Focus on the Kingdom

Vol. 14 No. 5

Anthony Buzzard, editor

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## 21st Theological Conference May 3-6, 2012

**Simpsonwood Conference Center, Norcross, GA**

We are not far from our 21<sup>st</sup> annual “Theological Conference.” (Do not for a moment let that title deter you. “Theology” has become a dirty word in some circles, but is only the study of God and His will.) Do come, and bring your friends.

As I revisit some of the remarkable and very moving faith stories presented over the years, I am impressed with all the good things that have been reported by those from all parts of the world who have attended. Now that we have the amazing gift of Internet technology, the talents of skilled believers allow us to film the proceedings for posterity. This enables the work of the conference to be *permanently* available on websites. The fruits of the conference stretch far beyond the brief time we have together at Simpsonwood. Please join this team effort. **This year Dr. Dale Tuggy, Professor of Philosophy at The State University of New York (SUNY Fredonia) and a committed unitarian, has agreed to be among our speakers.**

The fact is that fellowship with others of the same faith is a vital necessity for our communal and individual growth. Please *do* make the effort (and sacrifice) to bless us with your presence.

Some may wish to be baptized. Baptisms in the scenic river close to Simpsonwood have always been moving occasions for us all. You may wish to give your “faith story.” Some of you will be meeting fellow unitary monotheists, Gospel of the Kingdom believers for the first time. Others will renew long-held friendships. We do hope that you will be able to make the trip and be inspired by the various speakers. Our emphasis is on presenting the faith to the world as our necessary participation in the Great Commission given us by Jesus. The Kingdom of God must be preached worldwide, Jesus said, and only then will the end come (Matt. 24:14). We need to consider our individual part in that effort. The arrival of the tool of the Internet makes Matthew 24:14 possible in a brand new way. We have exciting new websites to report, and a gifted younger generation is adding their skills to the important issue of making public the saving truths we hold in common. Also, my 10-minute video “Jesus is Still a Jew” at [youtube.com](http://youtube.com) now has about 75 pages of comment in the form of concise statements of our common beliefs. Along with huge

increase of public exposure, “Abrahamics” are increasing their influence, but we need to do much more. The Great Commission remains a large task! The opposition is daunting, making our effort a kind of David and Goliath exercise!

**To register** please call Atlanta Bible College at 800-347-4261 or 678-833-1839 or mail the form on the back page by **April 13**. The non-refundable deposit is \$50 per individual or couple.

**Registration deadline: April 13**

### Conference Cost

Includes 3 nights, all meals, snacks, conf. fee, and tax

Single	Couple Rate	Double (per person)	Triple (per person)	Quad (per person)
\$340	\$505 per couple	\$260	\$245	\$230

### Transportation (Judy: 678-485-8492)

We will provide transportation between Atlanta airport and Simpsonwood for \$25 round-trip or \$15 one-way, at the following times:

Airport to Simpsonwood		
Thurs, May 3	1:00 pm	3:30 pm
Simpsonwood to Airport		
Sun., May 6	1:00 pm	

Please arrange your arrival time on Thursday early enough to catch one of the two shuttle runs. On Sunday, May 6, we will provide 1 shuttle run. In order to allow you enough time to catch your return flight, we suggest you **not book your return flight prior to 3:30 p.m.**

The conference begins with registration at 4 pm on Thursday and ends with lunch on Sunday. Driving directions to Simpsonwood Conference Center are at [www.simpsonwood.org](http://www.simpsonwood.org) The address is 4511 Jones Bridge Circle NW, Norcross, GA 30092.

*Here I resume my translation of the gospel of John. Chapters 1-5 are at our website, [restorationfellowship.org](http://restorationfellowship.org)*

## John Chapter 6

**A**fter these things Jesus crossed the Lake of Galilee (or Tiberias) and a large crowd followed him because they had seen the miraculous signs which he was performing for sick people. Jesus then went up a mountain and sat there with his disciples. The Jewish festival of Passover was approaching. Jesus looked out on the large crowd which was coming to him, and he said to Philip, “Where are we going to buy food for these

people to eat?" He said this as a test for Philip because he knew what he was intending to do. So Philip answered, "200 denarii worth of bread would be no good even for each of them to have a little bit." One of his disciples, Andrew, brother of Simon Peter, said, "There is a young lad here who has five loaves of bread and two fish, but this is hardly sufficient for such a crowd." Jesus said, "Tell the people to sit down." There was a lot of grass at that place, and so about 5,000 men were seated. Jesus then took the loaves and having given thanks divided them to the people who were seated. So also with the fish, as much as they wanted. He said to the disciples, "Collect the remaining pieces of bread so that nothing is wasted." So they gathered what was left of the five barley loaves, filling 12 baskets. When the people saw the miraculous sign that Jesus had performed they were saying, "This must truly be the prophet who was to come into the world." [Deut. 18:15-18]

So Jesus, knowing that they were going to seize him and make him king, went off again alone to the mountain. And when it was late the disciples went off across the lake to Capernaum, and it was already dark and Jesus had not yet come to them. The sea was becoming rough because a strong wind was blowing. When they had rowed about 3 or 4 miles they saw Jesus walking on the sea and approaching them, and they were frightened. He said to them, "It's me;<sup>1</sup> don't be scared." They wanted to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat arrived at the shore where they were headed.

The next day the crowd standing on the other side of the lake saw only one small boat there. They noticed that Jesus had not gone in the boat with his disciples, but that the disciples had left on their own. When they saw that Jesus was not there nor the disciples with him, they got into small boats and went off to Capernaum looking for Jesus. Finding him across the lake, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?"

Jesus answered, "I tell you on the highest authority, you are looking for me not because you saw the miracles but because you were given food and were satisfied. Do not work for perishable food, but for the food which remains in the Age to Come [the food of immortality which will get you into the Kingdom], which the Son of Man [the Human Being] will give you because the Father, who is God,<sup>2</sup> has authorized him to provide this." So they said to him, "What shall we do to work the works of God?" Jesus answered, "This is the work of God: that you believe in the One whom God has commissioned as

<sup>1</sup>The Greek is *ego eimi*, meaning "It's me." Elsewhere Jesus said *ego eimi* (4:26, 8:24, 58, etc.) the meaning is "I am the Messiah — certainly not "I am God," which would make 2 Gods.

<sup>2</sup>God (the God) is the Father 1300 times in the NT.

His representative." So they said to him, "What sign are you going to give us so that we may understand and believe you? What will you do? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness as it is written [in Scripture]: He [God] gave them bread from heaven to eat." So Jesus told them, "I tell you on the highest authority: it was not Moses who gave you that bread from heaven but my Father who gives you the genuine bread from heaven, for God's bread is the bread from heaven and it gives Life to the world." So they said to him, "Lord, keep on giving us this bread."

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Everyone who comes to me will not be hungry and the one believing in me will never be thirsty. But I told you that you have seen me and still do not believe. Everyone whom my Father gives to me comes to me, and the person who comes to me I will not dismiss, because I have come down from heaven<sup>3</sup> not to do my own will but the will of the one commissioning me. This is the will of the one who commissioned me: that everyone given to me should not be lost, but I will resurrect him on the final day of this age. This is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him should gain the Life of the Age to Come [immortality in the future Kingdom on earth], and I will resurrect him on the final day of this age."

This caused the Jews to grumble at him because he said "I am the bread which comes from heaven." They said, "Isn't this Jesus the son of Joseph whom we know, whose father and mother we know? How then can he say that he came down from heaven?" Jesus answered them, "Don't grumble among yourselves. No one is able to come to me unless the Father who commissioned me draws him, and I will resurrect him on the final day of this age. It stands written [in Scripture] in the prophets: 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me, not that anyone has seen the Father except the One who is from the Father; he has seen the Father.<sup>4</sup> I tell you on the highest authority, the one who believes has the Life of the Age to Come. I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness and died. This is the **bread which comes down from heaven** so that you may eat it and not die. I am the life-giving bread which came from heaven. If someone eats this bread he will live in the Age

<sup>3</sup>Note the important idiom "to come down from heaven." "Every good and perfect gift comes down from heaven... True wisdom comes down from heaven" (James 1:17; 3:15). This is not a literal descent of a person, but the heavenly gift of God to man, in this case the Son of God whom God gave (Isa. 9:6).

<sup>4</sup>For "seeing and hearing" the Father, cp. 8:26, 38; 1 John 3:6; 3 John 11. The word "see" in John is not always a literal seeing but more an understanding and appreciation.

to Come [not “heaven at death”], and the **bread which I will give is my flesh**<sup>5</sup> and it is for the life of the world.”

So the Jews were arguing among themselves, “How can this person give us his flesh to eat?” Jesus replied, “I tell you on the highest authority: unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man [the Human Being] and drink his blood you have no life in yourselves. The one ‘chewing on’ my flesh and drinking my blood has the Life of the Age to Come, and I will resurrect him on the last day of this [present] age. For my flesh is the genuine food and my blood is genuine drink. The one ‘chewing on my flesh’ and drinking my blood remains in me and I in him. Just as the living Father commissioned me, so I live because of the Father and the one chewing on me [absorbing my teachings] will live because of me. This is the bread which came down from heaven — not like your ancestors who died. The one chewing this bread will live in the coming age.” This was Jesus’ message as he taught in the synagogue in Capernaum.

Many of his disciples who heard this said, “This is a difficult teaching. Who can grasp it?” Jesus, conscious of the fact that they were grumbling over his teaching, said to them, “Are you offended by this too? What if you should see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?<sup>6</sup> It is the spirit which gives life; the flesh gains you nothing. The words which I have spoken to you *are* spirit and they are life. But there are some among you who refuse to believe.” Jesus knew from the beginning which ones would not believe and who would betray him, so he said, “That’s why I said to you, no one can come to me unless it is granted to him by the Father.”

Because of these words many of his disciples left him and no longer accompanied him. So Jesus said to the twelve, “Are you wanting to leave also?” Simon Peter replied, “Master,<sup>7</sup> who would we join? You have the words of the Life of the Age to Come,<sup>8</sup> and we believe

<sup>5</sup>Note carefully that the bread which came down from heaven is the *flesh* of Jesus, i.e. the human Jesus. The language is metaphorical, and does not support a Trinitarian Jesus, because no Trinitarian thinks that the *human* Jesus was alive before his birth!

<sup>6</sup>Note carefully that the subject of his ascent is the *human being*. The reference is to the Son of Man in Daniel, who had previously been seen in *a vision* of the future, with God in heaven. Jesus went to heaven at his ascension.

<sup>7</sup>The Greek is *kurios*, lord, and means of course, “lord, rabbi, teacher.” Jesus is the lord *Messiah* who was born (Luke 2:11), and the lord, son of David (Matt. 15:22; 20:30) — certainly not the Lord *God*, who is the Father. There is only one Lord God, the Father, and so Jesus cannot be Lord God, which makes two!

<sup>8</sup>That is, the teachings of Jesus, when believed and obeyed, give us access to immortality in the future Kingdom of God on earth.

and have come to know that you are God’s Holy One.” Jesus replied, “Have I not chosen you twelve, yet one of you is a devil?” He was referring to Judas Iscariot. He was one of the twelve and about to betray Jesus. ✧

## What is the Difference Between “Lord,” “lord” and “LORD”?

The following information is vital for clear understanding of Scripture and the all-important issue about who God is and who Jesus is in relation to God. The divine name YHWH (probably pronounced Yahweh) is commonly referred to as the tetragrammaton (four-letter word). Bible translators adopted the practice used in most English versions of rendering that name as “LORD” in all capital letters (nearly 7,000 times in our Old Testament). This was to distinguish it from *Adonai*, another Hebrew word rendered “Lord” (capital L and lower-case letters o-r-d). *Adonai* means “Lord God,” “the supreme Lord,” and is a synonym for the divine name YHVH. Wherever the two names stand together in the Old Testament as a compound name for God, they can be rendered “Sovereign Lord,” i.e. Lord God, *Adonai YHVH* (occasionally *YHVH Adonai*).

The name YHVH was introduced, it appears, to Moses, but was not known to Abraham and others living before Moses: “As God the Almighty [El Shaddai] I appeared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but my name, LORD (YHVH), I did not make known to them” (Exod. 6:3).

For those reading the Greek, the LXX (= Septuagint, translation by Jews from 300 BC of the Hebrew into Greek):

καὶ ὤφθη πρὸς Ἀβραὰμ καὶ Ἰσαακ καὶ Ἰακώβ θεὸς ὦν αὐτῶν καὶ τὸ ὄνομά μου κύριος οὐκ ἐδήλωσα αὐτοῖς “And I appeared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as their God, and my name LORD I did not reveal to them.”

Some of our readers will enjoy the Hebrew of the same verse:

יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב בְּאֵל  
שְׁרֵי וּשְׁמִי יְהוָה לֹא נִודַעְתִּי לָהֶם:

Now notice the Latin translation, the Vulgate, and observe carefully how Jerome the translator knew about the word *Adonai* (the supreme Lord) in the 4<sup>th</sup> century: “Qui apparui Abraham Isaac et Iacob in Deo omnipotente et nomen meum *Adonai* non indicavi eis.”

The essential lesson to be remembered is that the Son of God, Jesus is not YHVH! He is YHVH’s uniquely fathered, generated Son, brought into existence by miracle in Mary (Luke 1:35; Matt. 1:18, 20: Note, “begotten, fathered in her”). God became the Father of Jesus, the Son at that moment.

Paul summarized, late in his ministry, the essential Christian creed. This verse should be conscientiously memorized by all believers: “There is one mediator **between God** and human beings, **a human**, the Messiah Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5). All translations are correct here.

The God of the Hebrew Bible is the same God of the New Testament. He is both the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and also the God and Father of Jesus Christ:

“For there is no **difference between Jew and Gentile: The same Lord is Lord of all**” (Rom. 10:12).

“God is the God of Jews and Gentiles” (Rom. 3:29).

Now the story becomes very fascinating, as we investigate the Bible as a sort of “crime scene.” The rules of capitalization agreed to by most English translations have been violated in one highly significant verse, Psalm 110:1, more often quoted in the New Testament than any other verse and cited by Jesus to silence all argument (Matt. 22:41-46). We introduce the subject with this title:

### **What Is in a Vowel Point? The Difference Between God and Man**

We want now to introduce you to the all-important word *adoni* (pronounced “adonee”) (not *Adonai*, Lord God, but lord, master). Professor Larry Hurtado, celebrated author of a classic on Christology: “There is no question but that the terms *ADONAI* and *adoni* function differently. The one (*ADONAI*) a reverent way of avoiding pronouncing the word *YHVH* and the other (*ADONI*), the use of the same word [but a different vowel at the end] for non-divine (=non-Deity) figures.”<sup>9</sup>

### **Hard Facts on the Title for Christ (*adoni*, my lord, not *Adonai*, Lord God) in Psalm 110:1**

[My explanation for English readers is in square brackets. See further the appendix in our *Who is Jesus? booklet*, free in various languages at our site [restorationfellowship.org](http://restorationfellowship.org)]

Here is the truth about Psalm 110:1, the NT’s master key text, from the entry “Lord” in *Whittaker Revised Brown Driver Briggs* (standard lexicon of biblical Hebrew used by all scholars). *Strong’s Concordance* will not show you this critically important distinction.

[Psalm 110:1: “The LORD (*YHVH*) says to my lord (*adoni*)...” pronounced “adonee” = my lord, never a divine title.]

Here we have the biblical usage of the all important title **adoni**. It has these meanings:

#### **1. singular. lord, master**

With suffix of 1<sup>st</sup> person singular [*adoni*, my lord, Ps. 110:1, **195 times in OT**]

(1) **ref. to men:** *my lord, my master*

(a) *master*

(b) *husband*

**The Hebrew *adoni* (“my lord”) is wrongly capitalized in Psalm 110:1 in many versions** but not in RSV, NRSV, NEB, JPS, etc. In other words most translations put a capital L on the second lord in Psalm 110:1. This misleads the reader into believing that the second lord is *Adonai*, the title for the supreme Lord God! In fact the word is *adoni* (“adonee”), a title which in all 195 occurrences never refers to God, but always to a *human* superior, occasionally a created angel.

Jesus the Son is the supreme **human** lord, not God.

This title (*adoni*, my lord) is the Messianic title *par excellence* for Jesus as the lord Messiah (Luke 2:11). Luke also calls Jesus the **Lord’s** Messiah (Yahweh’s Messiah: Luke 2:26). Elizabeth was visited by Mary, the mother of “my lord” (Luke 1:43). She was not visited by God, but by the lord Messiah (Luke 2:11).

“Our lord David” (1 Kings 1:11, etc.) provides the model for the final David’s title, as “our/my lord Jesus Christ” (hundreds of times the proper title for Jesus, the lord Messiah). Jesus is the lord King Messiah. Our/ my lord Jesus Christ.

A professor at Dallas Theological Seminary kindly agreed to change the confusing misinformation in their *Bible Knowledge Commentary* which reported wrongly the second lord of Psalm 110:1 as *Adonai*! The word there is *adoni*.

Paula Frederiksen, Professor of Religious Studies at Boston University, mistakenly and inadvertently reported the second lord of Psalm 110:1 as *Adonai*, and I suggested that the mistake be changed. She graciously wrote, “Thanks so much for pointing out the error in my reference to *Adonai* in Ps. 110:1. I grabbed my Tanach [OT] and you are right — the word is *adoni*, not *adonai*. We all need each other!”

The supreme importance of Psalm 110:1 has been noted by today’s leading scholar on Christology, Dr. James Dunn:

“The affirmation of Jesus’ lordship is one which we can trace back at least to the earliest days of Christian reflection on Christ’s resurrection. One of the Scriptures which quickly became **luminous** for the first believers was evidently Ps. 110:1. The first Christians now knew who ‘my lord’ was who was thus addressed by the Lord God. It could only be Messiah Jesus. The text was clearly in mind in several Pauline passages.”<sup>10</sup>

Dunn on 1 Corinthians 8:4-6: “In direct opposition to the tolerant pluralism of Hellenism, Paul affirms, ‘But for us there is one lord Jesus Christ.’ For Paul the risen Christ was simply ‘the Lord’ and he was personally convinced that eventually his lordship would be acknowledged by all. As 1 Cor. 8:5-6 itself implies this was an expression not so much of intolerance as of belief

<sup>9</sup> From personal correspondence, June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2000.

<sup>10</sup> *The Theology of Paul*, Eerdmans, 1998, p. 246.

in the uniqueness of Christ, and a corollary of the equivalent uncompromising **Jewish monotheism**. Jesus is the *one* Lord just as, and indeed because, God is the *one* God” (p. 248).

James Dunn: “Should we then say that Jesus was confessed as GOD from the earliest days in Hellenistic Christianity? That would be to claim too much.

“1. The emergence of a confession of Jesus in terms of divinity was largely facilitated by the emergence of **Ps. 110:1** from very early on (most clearly in Mark 12:36; Acts 2:34; 1 Cor. 15:25; Heb. 1:13). ‘The Lord says to my lord...’ Its importance lies here in the double use of *kurios* [lord]. The one is clearly Yahweh, but who is the other? [Note two subjects, two individuals.] Clearly *not* Yahweh, but an exalted being whom the Psalmist calls *kurios* [lord].

“2. Paul calls Jesus *kurios*, but he seems to have marked reservations about actually calling him ‘God.’ (Rom. 9:5 is the only candidate within the main Pauline corpus, and even there the text is unclear.) Similarly he refrains from praying *to* Jesus. More typical of his attitude is that he prays to GOD *through* Jesus (Rom. 1:8; 7:25; 2 Cor. 1:20; Col. 3:17). [Paul does give thanks to Jesus, too (I Tim. 1:12)]

“3. ‘Jesus is Lord’ is only part of a fuller confession for Paul. For at the same time as he affirms Jesus as ‘Lord,’ he also affirms ‘God is one’ (1 Cor. 8:5-6; Eph. 4:5-6). Here Christianity shows itself as a developed form of Judaism, with its **monotheistic confession as one of the most important parts of its Jewish inheritance**; for in Judaism the most fundamental confession is ‘God is one.’ ‘There is only one God’ (Deut. 6:4). Hence also Rom. 3:30; Gal. 3:20; 1 Tim. 2:5 (cp. James 2:19). Within Palestine and the Jewish mission such an affirmation would have been unnecessary — Jews and Christians shared a belief in God’s oneness [not a Trinity!]. But in the Gentile mission this Jewish presupposition within Christianity would have emerged into prominence, in face of the wider belief in ‘gods many.’ The point for us to note is that *Paul can hail Jesus as Lord not in order to identify him with God, but rather if anything to distinguish him from the One God* (cp. particularly 1 Cor. 15:24-28). So too Jesus’ Lordship could be expressed in cosmic dimensions without posing too many problems to monotheism, since Wisdom speculations provided a ready and appropriate terminology (particularly 1 Cor. 8:6, Col. 1:15-20; Heb. 1:3ff).”<sup>11</sup>

Dunn continues:

“So far as we can now tell, Jesus thought of himself as Wisdom’s *messenger* — a self-understanding reflected

particularly in Matt. 11:25-27; Luke 7:31-35; 11:49-51. That is to say, there is no evidence that Jesus thought of himself as preexistent Wisdom and nothing in the traditions of Q [source of the gospel information] and Mark which implies that the thought of preexistence was present either to Jesus or Mark. The idea of preexistence first entered by way of implication with *identification* of Christ with *Wisdom herself*...

[In post-biblical times, preexistence *in God’s plan* was turned into a literal preexistence of a second Person in the Godhead, thus violating the creed of Jesus, Mark 12:29, agreed with a fellow Jew.]

“Now here we must recall that within Judaism Wisdom was only a way of speaking about God’s action in creation, revelation and redemption without actually speaking about God. Wisdom, like the name of God, the spirit of God, the logos (word) of God denotes the immanent [present with us humans] activity of God, without detracting from God’s wholly other transcendence. For pre-Christian Judaism Wisdom was neither an inferior heavenly being (one of the heavenly council) nor a divine hypostasis [=person] (as in the **later Trinitarian conception of God**). Such a development would have been (and in the event was) unacceptable to Judaism’s strict monotheism [and to the monotheism of Jesus!]. Wisdom in fact is no more than *personification of God’s immanence*, no more to be regarded as a distinct person within the Godhead than the rabbinic concept or talk of a preexistent Torah.

“The probability then is that Paul in applying Wisdom language to Christ is in effect saying: that which you have hitherto ascribed to Wisdom [or Torah or word], we see most fully expressed and embodied in Christ; that same power and wisdom you recognize to be manifested in God’s creative, revelatory and redemptive purpose, we now see manifested finally and exclusively in Jesus Christ our Lord. [Note in connection with the ‘charismatic’ debate that critics of some ‘charismata’ are rightly unimpressed when they are asked to believe that Jesus Christ is present, when only ‘power’ and not wisdom and revealed Truth are present!]...This is the reason Paul never used the word Jesus alone for the preexistent one. Jesus was not himself preexistent, he was the man that preexistent Wisdom became” (p. 221).

“Paul does not yet understand the risen Christ as the *object* of worship; he is the theme of worship...Even the **title Lord** becomes a way of **distinguishing Jesus from God** rather than identifying him with God (Rom. 15:6; 1 Cor. 8:6; 15:24-28; 2 Cor. 1:3, 11:31; Eph. 1:3, 17; Phil. 2:11; Col 1:3. Paul was and remained a monotheist” (p. 226). [Jesus and Paul were unitary, not Trinitarian monotheists.]

<sup>11</sup> *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament*, SCM Press, 1990, p. 53, emphasis his.

Professor Biggs: “The Apostles did *not* identify Jesus with Yahweh. Ps. 110:1 prevented this” (Regius Prof. of Ecclesiastical History, Oxford).<sup>12</sup>

“*Echad* means one and not two...The words of the Shema take for granted that Yahweh is unique, the Only God (Ecc. 4:8)” (Prof. A.F. Knight, *Expository Times*).

Did not Jesus command us to accept this creed as the basis of obedient faith? Jesus was not a Trinitarian, so why are you?

“From Justin Martyr to the Council of Nicea, Christians generally built up their interpretations in accord with patterns established in the earlier period. **They went beyond the writings of the NT age**, principally in two respects: in applying the entire psalm to Jesus and in arguing explicitly for his divinity [Deity] on the basis of its first and third verses” (Dr. Hay, formerly prof. at Princeton, *Glory at the Right Hand: Psalm 110 in Early Christian Interpretation*, p. 51). [It was, however, proper to apply the whole psalm to Jesus, as the NT does]

Professor Bateman of Dallas Theological Seminary maintained in an article “Psalm 110:1 in the New Testament” (*Bibliotheca Sacra*, Oct. 1992) that Psalm 110:1 really could not refer to Jesus since (as Bateman thought) Jesus is God and *adoni* (my lord, not Lord) never means God. Bateman says “the form ‘to my lord’ is never used elsewhere in the Old Testament as a divine reference.” He presents a strong case for his position, stating that 94% of the 168 (actually 195) occurrences of the forms of *adoni* apply to earthly lords, with the remaining occurrences being “when Joshua, Gideon, Daniel, and Zechariah addressed an angelic being as ‘my lord.’”<sup>13</sup>

I note this:

The text in Psalm 110:1 is absolutely secure. There are no manuscript variations. *L’adoni* means “to my lord.”

There are **195** samples of *adoni* (my lord). These include “my lord” (162 times), “against my lord” (twice), “and my lord” (6 times), “from my lord” (once) and “to/for my lord” (24 times). Total: 195 times.

*L’adoni*, “to my lord,” appears 24 times. These are found in Genesis, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 1 Chronicles and Psalms (110:1). *L’adoni* is properly translated in our versions, with a lower-case letter on lord, as:

“to my master Abraham” (*l’adoni*)

“to my lord Esau” (*l’adoni*)

“to our lord” (Joseph) (*l’adoni*)

David says to Saul: “to my lord [*l’adoni*], the LORD’s anointed.”

Abigail says to David: “for my lord [*l’adoni*] who is fighting the LORD’s battles.”

Abigail says, “The LORD shall do for my lord [*l’adoni*] David.”

Abigail says, “The LORD will do well for my lord [*l’adoni*] David.”

Joab says, “May the LORD add to His people a 100 times as many as they are. But my lord king [*adoni*, David], are they not all my lord’s [*adoni*] servants? Why does my lord [*adoni*, David] seek this thing?”

David says, “The LORD said to my lord [*l’adoni*]” (Messiah, Ps. 110:1).

The phrase *l’adoni* (to my lord) is contrasted with the one LORD YHVH/Kurios both in the Hebrew and in the Greek Septuagint translation from the third century BC. Because *l’adoni* is rendered in Greek as *to kurio mou* — to **my** lord — we have the clearest confirmation that the vowel points are entirely accurate in our Masoretic text. (The vowel points were added in the Hebrew from around 600 AD.) In other words both the LXX (Septuagint, Greek version of the OT) and the NT Scripture translate the *l’adoni* of Psalm 110:1 as *to kurio mou*, “to my lord.”

Thus we have testimony from BC times plus the inspired New Testament that the vowel points for *adoni* have not been altered. There is no basis at all for questioning the accuracy of the Bible at this point.

It is utterly impossible that Psalm 110:1 could ever have read “The LORD (Yahweh) said to **Adonai** (the Lord God)”! *Kurios mou* in Greek corresponds to “**my** lord” and *adoni* is never a title of Deity.

Psalm 110:1 is the master Christological key to the New Testament. The original meaning of “lord” here has been either ignored by commentators (including Dr. Bauckham who thinks that the Shema was split and divided between God and Jesus) **or corrupted in many translations by placing a capital letter on the second lord, which according to the practice of the translations would misleadingly tell you that the word there is Adonai**, which it is not. The NASB (edition of 1996) in its margin at Acts 2:34 misreports the facts of the Hebrew text and says that the Hebrew word for “my lord” was **Adonai**, the Lord God. *Adonai* is the Lord God in all 449 occurrences. The word as we know, in Ps. 110:1 is not in fact *Adonai* but *adoni*, a mere difference between God and man!

I wrote to “the dean” of evangelical scholarship, Dr Howard Marshall:

“Professor Marshall, may I please venture a comment on your interesting discussion of the all-important Christological testimonium from Psalm 110:1. On p. 204 of *Jesus the Savior* you note the crucial difference between *Adonai*, the divine title, and *adoni*, the exclusively human title (195 times). You say that the confusion of the two lords is avoided in the printed

<sup>12</sup> *International Critical Commentary, 1 Pet.*, 1910, p.99.

<sup>13</sup> Barry Davis, “Is Psalm 110:1 a Messianic Psalm?” (*Bibliotheca Sacra*, April-June, 2000).

versions of the OT which use 'lord' both times and print the first lord in caps, LORD for YHVH.

"The problem is that most (not RV, RSV and NRSV) **print the second lord with initial capital Lord**. Now that form of printing, with capital, belongs in every other case to the Hebrew *Adonai*, the substitute divine title. This leaves the reader with the false impression that *Adonai* and not *adoni* is the word in the original. Thus in many commentaries and some books (even commentaries such as the Dallas Seminary commentary) it is confidently asserted that the Messiah is defined in the Psalm as *Adonai*, and that is proof of his Deity. The facts here presented in the Psalm, however, place the Messiah in a superior human, royal Messianic category. It is *in that sense* that the NT recognizes Jesus as Lord (cp. Luke 2:11) and Mary as 'the mother of my lord' (Luke 1:43).

"Would it be fair to add that the LXX version shows the difference properly by rendering *l'Adonai* (to the Lord God) as *to kurio* whereas *l'adoni* (to my lord) comes over in the Greek as *to kurio mou*, 'to my lord'?"

"I feel that this Psalm and the careful distinction it displays is only now beginning to get the careful attention it deserves."

Dr. Marshall replied graciously:

"Dear Anthony, I agree with what you say about Psalm 110:1. The LXX is translating correctly...The use of the Psalm does not identify Jesus as Adonai." — Dr. Howard Marshall

Psalm 110:1 is the backbone of New Testament revelation about God and His one Messiah, Jesus. It is the New Testament Greek which confirms and endorses the Hebrew text of the Old Testament.

"The oracle of YHVH to *adoni*" (my lord, not Lord!). When translated into Greek in BC times, this came out as the oracle of *Kurios* (YHVH) to my lord (*adoni*). The New Testament follows the Septuagint here and confirms the Hebrew. There is a huge difference in meaning between LORD GOD and *adoni*, my lord. My lord is the Messiah, not God.

It is a worldwide theological disaster to confuse the unique, unmatched position of the God of the Bible, of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and of Jesus, and thus of Christians. It would be a calamity to suggest that GOD was speaking to GOD! This would immediately signal two GODS, two YAHWEHs. That is not monotheism and is condemned from one end of Scripture to the other. ✧

## Comments

"God bless you in the powerful name of Jesus Christ, our living lord (small 'ell') and savior! I thoroughly enjoyed your recent article in *Focus on the Kingdom* (Nov. 2011), 'Would You Believe it?! Mistranslation in

Nearly All Bibles.' While not a scholar in either Hebrew nor Greek, I can still comprehend the subtle difference between 'Adoni' and 'Adonai,' showing even further proof that Jesus is *not* God Almighty! Thank you for making it easier for us laymen who study the Bible — you are a wonderful teacher.

"I wish to relate to you a true story regarding a *run-in* I had once with a Trinitarian — perhaps this will bless you. We were debating whether or not Jesus was God, and of course, not being able to logically refute my obvious questions such as, How could Jesus be God, when the Scriptures declare that 'God cannot be tempted' but 'Jesus was tempted in all points as we are,' 'God is not a man' compared to 'the man Christ Jesus,' etc, he evaded them by traveling all over the Bible with other nonsense: 'Yeah, but what about this one?' We were just wasting our time together.

"Then it hit me! I said, 'Wait a minute...maybe you are right after all!' He loved that. So I proceeded with my subtle plan to trap him in his own words. I said, 'Well now, since Jesus is God, and God is Jesus, then they are equivalent terms, right?' He agreed, so I continued, 'Then whenever we read *Jesus* in the Bible, we can replace it with *God* and vice-versa, and we can still make sense out of the Scriptures, right?' He heartily agreed again. So I said, 'How about we look at John 14:12? "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father."' Then I said, 'Let us replace *I* (meaning Jesus) with *God*.' He agreed again! Then I explained that this verse *now indicates* that we can do the works that God does, and *even greater than these* we will do. Then I asked him, 'If this is true, then can we *really do* greater works than God?' He was speechless. Then I reminded him of one who actually tried such a thing one time — Satan, who started a war in heaven trying to usurp God's throne (claiming to be greater than God). Then I told him that anyone who thinks he is greater than God is acting just like the Devil. And any doctrine which indicates that we can do greater works than God is 'antichrist.' I had hoped he would finally see the folly of the Trinitarian doctrine and change his mind. Sadly though, he became very enraged and stormed off saying, 'You tricked me, and that's just what the Devil does.'

"To this day, I honestly believe I had given him ample cause to wonder about this '3-in-1 God' of his. At the least, I know in my heart that he has never forgotten our little conversation — I am sure that it made an impact on his life! What do you think? Was I acting poorly, tempting him? Or was I being more like Paul, who at times righteously 'caught people with guile'? ('I did not burden you myself; nevertheless, crafty fellow that I am, I took you in by deceit,' 2 Cor. 12:16)." — *New York*

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