

# Focus on the Kingdom

Vol. 14 No. 6

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.

## How the Human Jesus Was Suppressed

**A**dolf Harnack, prince of Church historians, writing his *History of Dogma* (4<sup>th</sup> edition, 1909), explains the dramatic shift from one understanding of Jesus to a radically different one. These are important issues for us all. We must discover the real Jesus, not a counterfeit one. He calls this the “displacement or suppression of the **historical Christ** by the preexisting Christ, that is the **real Christ** by the imagined or

fictitious Christ.” This happened through dogmatics, that is the dogmas of the Church. This development, he says, led to the “triumphant attempt to get rid of the earlier speculation about God and Christ **not by going back to the original teachings** but a more speculative ‘advance’ — an advance which finally **split monotheism** and weakened it, and also made Christ unrecognizable by splitting him (i.e. into two ‘natures’). When the logos Christology, i.e. the idea that Jesus was **preexistent as the Son of God** [a misreading of John 1:1], triumphed fully, the condemnation of the teaching of **strict monotheism [the monotheism of Jesus!]** led to the putting in place of the Gnostic two-natures teaching about Christ.”

“This apparent enrichment of Christ amounted to an impoverishment, because it in fact **obliterated the complete human personality of Christ**” (Vol. I, pp. 703, 704).

In his *What is Christianity?* Harnack wrote: Under the influence of dogma, “Christ’s appearance in itself, the entrance of a **divine being** into the world came of necessity to rank as the chief fact, as itself the real redemption.” Harnack says that “with the Greeks this inevitably set an entirely **new theory** in motion.” It shattered the Messianic idea. With this new view of redemption, that is the **entrance from a preexisting life of a person into the world**, “the very existence of the Gospel was threatened by drawing away men’s thoughts and interests into another direction. When we look at the history of dogma, who can deny that that is what happened?” (pp. 185, 186).

Harnack points out that the “first formulated **opposition** to the emerging [false] Logos Christology [i.e. that *the Son* preexisted his birth as **God the Son**]... was called forth by interest in the evangelical synoptic idea of Christ [the idea presented by Matthew, Mark and Luke].” The opposition also attacked the idea of the use of Platonic philosophy in Christian doctrine. “The whole theological interpretation of the first two articles of faith was gradually involved in controversy [as today still].”<sup>1</sup>

Harnack asks: “Did not the sending forth of the Logos [i.e. the preexisting Son, rather than word, John 1:1] to create the world recall the [pagan] emanation of the aeons? Was not ditheism [**belief in two Gods**] set up, if **two divine beings** were to be worshiped? Did not the doctrine of a heavenly aeon rendered incarnate in the Redeemer contain another remnant of the old **Gnostic** leaven? Not only were the laity driven to such criticisms...but also all those theologians who refused to give any place to Platonic philosophy in Christian dogmatics. A conflict began which lasted for more than a century [and continues unresolved today]...It was not a

war of the laity against theologians only...but also a war of theologians against those theologians who opposed their brethren. We must describe it as the strenuous effort of Stoic **Platonism** to obtain supremacy in the theology of the Church. The victory of Plato...the history of the displacement of the historical Christ by the preexistent Christ, of the Christ of reality by the imagined Christ, in dogmatics. Finally as the victorious attempt to substitute the mystery of the person of Christ for the person himself. And by means of a theological formula unintelligible to the laity [later the “mystery of the Trinity”], to put the laity with their Christian faith under guardians...

“When the Logos Christology [i.e. the idea that the word was a preexisting Son, the Logos] obtained a complete victory, the traditional view of the supreme Deity as one person [true monotheism as Jesus believed it], and along with this every thought of the real and complete human personality of the Redeemer was in fact condemned as being intolerable in the Church. Its place was taken by the ‘nature’ of Christ which without ‘the person’ is simply a cipher. The defeated party had right on its side” (*History of Dogma*, p. 10).

These observations from the “prince of church history” need to be read thoughtfully and carefully, probably several times. Their message is practical and relevant. The point Harnack makes is this: From the second century, Christianity was “reinterpreted” (a sophisticated way of saying “twisted”!) by the introduction of a second God, the preexisting God the Son, Jesus. The precious unitarian creed of Jesus (Mark 12:29) was lost and replaced by a creed which began as two-in-one and developed into three-in-one. The heart of Jesus’ own definition of God was smothered and centuries of dispute followed. Reform today means going behind those unfortunate developments in order to return to the pure words of Jesus. The constant warning of Jesus is crystal clear, and especially in the gospel of John. Jesus climaxed his ministry with these impressive, memorable words: “And Jesus cried out...If anyone hears my sayings and does not keep them, I don’t judge him, for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. He who rejects me and does not receive my sayings has one who judges him. The word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day” (John 12:44-48).

How well have we believed the words of Jesus, starting with Mark 1:14-15 (“Repent and believe the **Gospel** about the **Kingdom**”) and Mark 12:29? Note the illuminating truth of what Jesus says in John 12:48. To “accept him” means to hear and understand his words! To reject him is to reject his words! This merits a sustained meditation on our part. ✧

<sup>1</sup> *History of Dogma*, English version, Vol. III, p. 9.

# Shared Titles of God and Christ: The Biggest Stumbling Block to “Oneness Believers”

by Mike Hicks

**O**neeness Pentecostals, exponents of Modalism as it was anciently called, are correct in their acknowledgement that the Bible does not teach that God is a Trinity. Their belief that God is one singular Person is commendable and is certainly a minority position within Christendom. Their failure lies in retaining the false Trinitarian concept of the dual nature of Jesus, the idea that God, i.e. God the Son, became a man, that Christ has two natures: one deity, the other human. Whereas Trinitarians believe that God the Son became a man, Oneness believers insist that God the Father became a man. Both these views are false to Scripture.

Oneness adherents tend to place the distinction between the Son and the Father as “a flesh vs. Spirit” contrast. For example, let us look at three different ways of explaining Jesus praying to his Father in the garden of Gethsemane. We will consider the Trinitarian view, the Oneness view, and the Unitarian view.

**Trinitarian view:** God the Son was praying to God the Father.

**Oneness view:** Although Jesus *is* the Father robed in flesh, his human nature (the Son) was praying to his divine nature (the Father).

**Unitarian view:** The man, Christ Jesus, was praying to the One God of the Bible, his Father.

One of the major stumbling blocks to Oneness believers is the fact that titles which are applied to God are applied also to Jesus Christ. The assertion is that, since God and Jesus share many titles (Redeemer, Savior, God, Shepherd, Lord, King of Kings, Judge), they must be one and the same Person. This follows from the Oneness conviction that God is a single Person. The argument can be very convincing, and it is certainly one of the major hindrances to Oneness believers coming to a biblical unitarian understanding of God and Christ.

If it is true that the sharing of these titles means that Jesus is in fact the LORD God Himself, then it should stand to reason that nobody else could have these titles applied to them, since there is only one God. Let us see what the Scriptures reveal:

## Redeemer

“So I thought to inform you, saying, ‘Buy it before those who are sitting here, and before the elders of my people. **If you will redeem it**, redeem it; but if not, tell me that I may know; for there is no one but you to redeem it, and I am after you.’ And he said, **‘I will redeem it’**” (Ruth 4:4, NASB).

In this verse, Boaz is discussing with Naomi’s near kinsman who would **redeem** her land and marry her daughter-in-law, Ruth. The near kinsman rejected the deal, and so Boaz became Ruth’s **redeemer**.

## Savior

“Therefore you gave them into the hand of their enemies, who made them suffer. And in the time of their suffering they cried out to you, and you heard them from heaven, and according to your great mercies you gave them **saviors** who saved them from the hand of their enemies” (Nehemiah 9:27, ESV).

As seen in the book of Judges, Israel would often rebel against God, causing Him to oppress them with their enemies. Upon their repentance, God would send them a **savior**, that is, an individual from among Israel who would destroy the oppressor and save Israel.

## “God”

“Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘See, **I make you as God to Pharaoh**, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet’” (Exodus 7:1, NASB).

“I said, **‘You are gods**; and all of you are sons of the most High’” (Psalm 82:6, NASB).

The Hebrew word *Elohim*, meaning God/god, was applied to the true God (Yahweh), Moses, Israelite judges, kings, and false gods. The word simply means someone who has great authority and power, and does not only apply to Yahweh.

## Shepherd

“Son of man, prophesy against the **shepherds of Israel**. Prophesy and say to those shepherds, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, **“Woe, shepherds of Israel** who have been feeding themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flock?”’” (Ezekiel 34:2, NASB).

**“I will set shepherds over them** who will care for them, and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall any be missing, declares the LORD” (Jeremiah 23:4, ESV).

God spoke to the shepherds of Israel, even though He was the Shepherd of Israel. Moreover, during the millennium God will set up shepherds to feed His flock. These are the saints who will rule and reign with Christ.

## Lord

“So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, ‘After I am worn out, and **my lord** is old, shall I have pleasure?’” (Genesis 18:12, ESV).

**“The LORD says to my lord:** ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet’” (Psalm 110:1).

Many people in the Bible are referred to as lord. It is simply a term of respect, much like calling a man “sir”

today. David tells us that the LORD (Yahweh) prophetically told David's lord (*adoni*, the lord Messiah) to sit at His right hand. *Adoni* is a Hebrew word translated "lord" and refers all 195 times to a human or angelic NON-DEITY superior. It never refers to Yahweh. This Old Testament Scripture is quoted in the New Testament more than any other and is crucial to our understanding of Christ's relationship to God. Although David was king, he recognized that the future Messiah would be his superior and would sit at God's right hand. David never imagined that the Messiah would be a second GOD, making two GODS!

### King of kings

"You, O king, **the king of kings**, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, and the might, and the glory" (Daniel 2:37, ESV).

Daniel calls Nebuchadnezzar the king of kings. Daniel was not confusing him with Yahweh, but merely acknowledging the fact that human beings can share God's titles in certain situations. Moreover we see that, although he was considered "king of kings," his authority was a derived authority: it came from God almighty who is the ultimate King of Kings.

### Judge

"For the **LORD is our judge**; the LORD is our lawgiver; the LORD is our king; he will save us" (Isaiah 33:22, ESV).

"When **the LORD raised up judges** for them, **the LORD was with the judge** and delivered them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed and afflicted them" (Judges 2:18, NASB).

Ultimately, Yahweh is the Judge. Nevertheless, He raised up human judges and He was with them in their judgments. Paul said that there is coming a day when God will judge the world "by a man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising him from the dead" (Acts 17:31). This is an example of agency, which is the way in which God, ever since the fall of man, has interacted with humanity. The saints too are destined to judge the world (1 Cor. 6:2).

One can also see the concept of agency in the New Testament, in the relationship between Christ and his followers: "As he was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' And he said, 'Who are you, lord?' And he said, '**I am Jesus whom you are persecuting**'" (Acts 9:3-5, NASB).

Saul was not chasing Jesus around trying to arrest him. He was in fact persecuting the followers of Jesus. However, because the church is the body of Christ, they are his agents or ambassadors, and so to persecute them is to persecute Christ himself.

"When did we see you sick, or in prison, and come to you?' The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of mine, even the least of them, you did it to me'" (Matthew 25:39-40, NASB).

In biblical language, to do something to a Christian is to do something to Jesus. This does not, however, make the church identical to Jesus or Jesus identical to the church.

We also see titles shared by Christ and the church:

"Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, '**I am the light of the world**. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life'" (John 8:12, ESV).

"**You are the light of the world**. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden" (Matthew 5:14, ESV).

Either Jesus was extremely confused as to who he was and who we are, or he both acknowledged and used the concept of agency.

The fact that men and angels can bear the name and titles of God is well attested to in the Scriptures, as is the fact that Christians can function as agents of Jesus Christ. The principle of agency is critical for a right understanding of who Jesus is in relation to the One God (see Raymond James Essoe's "Shaliah: An Introduction to the Law of Agency" at [christianmonotheism.com](http://christianmonotheism.com)<sup>2</sup>).

As a former Oneness believer, I can appreciate the force of the shared titles argument. However, the argument falls flat when we see these same titles applied to other men. It should be fully expected that the Messiah, the special human agent whom God would use to redeem His creation, the one who fully represents and speaks for God, who is His very Word and image, would bear all of these divine titles. Indeed he is our Redeemer, our Savior, our God (in a Messianic sense). He is our Shepherd, our Lord, and our King. He is all of these things because this uniquely exalted position has been conferred on him by God: "And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority **has been given to me** in heaven and on earth'" (Matt. 28:18). ✧

<sup>2</sup>[www.christianmonotheism.com/media/text/Raymond%20Essoe%20-%20Shaliah.pdf](http://www.christianmonotheism.com/media/text/Raymond%20Essoe%20-%20Shaliah.pdf)

## Confusing the Two Lords of Psalm 110:1: A Way to Guarantee a Misunderstanding of the Bible

This magazine deliberately urges believers to think deeply about the identities of the Son of God, Jesus, and of God, who is the God and Father of Jesus. We encourage a complete rethinking of traditional Christology in the light of the all-important oracle provided by Psalm 110:1. This verse is precious to New Testament writers. It is a star witness, summoned over and over again in the New Testament. New Testament writers of Scripture quote it or allude to it more than any other text of the Hebrew Scriptures, *by far*. They wanted the voice of Jesus to be heard, since it was Jesus who silenced all objectors by citing the divine oracle of Psalm 110:1. Jesus loved this Psalm because his Father's amazing immortality plan was revealed in it.

The importance of Psalm 110:1 lies in its simple description of **two** exalted Persons. One, Yahweh, addresses the other, giving a prophetic oracle about the career of the Messiah. Yahweh makes a solemn prophetic utterance to David's lord, *adoni* (pronounced "adonee"). *Adoni* is the Lord Messiah (cp. Luke 2:11).

This word *adoni* needs to be part of every Christian's vocabulary. The second lord (*adoni*, "my lord") designates the one destined to remain at the Father's right hand until he comes as conquering Messiah to subdue his enemies and inaugurate the Kingdom of God on a renewed earth. Jesus knew that he was the promised Messiah so addressed, and his whole career was summed up in this astonishing oracle.

The scheme thus revealed is the framework of the entire New Testament outlook on the present session of Jesus in heaven and his expected return to establish the Messianic Kingdom of prophecy on earth. Paul reflected the simple beauty of Psalm 110:1 when he declared, "There is one God and one mediator between God and man, the **human being** Messiah Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5).

Yahweh and David's "lord" are clearly and obviously two distinct persons, in the modern psychological sense of that term. There is no possible route from the Psalm to the complex, unnatural definition of "person" which created in later Trinitarian, Nicene theology so many intractable problems. The Messianic Christology of Psalm 110:1 places the Messiah in a subordinate, yet highly exalted position relative to Yahweh, who remains a distinct Person in a class of His own. There is no question of compromising the unrestricted monotheism of the Hebrew Bible. The **One God** of Israel commands the Messiah to wait until the time comes for his final vindication. As Yahweh's agent the Messiah is David's *adon* or "lord." The form of the word as it appears in the Hebrew of Psalm 110:1 is *adoni* (= "my lord"). It is a

striking fact that the Lord **God** is nowhere ever addressed as *adoni*. This title is reserved for kings, prophets, human superiors in general, and occasionally angels. You will find it 195 times in the Hebrew Bible. Each sample is worth investigation.

Under the strain of having to ascribe coequality and coeternity to the Messiah, some commentators have shown a curious tendency to declare, **against the facts of the Hebrew text**, that in Psalm 110:1 Yahweh speaks to *Adonai*. The latter title is, of course, some 450 times, an alternative for the divine name and is used exclusively of Yahweh. Now if David's oracle had indeed stated that Yahweh spoke to *Adonai*, there would be a basis for the development of belief in a Godhead of more than one person! The text as it stands, however, provides not a hint of support for the Deity of the Messiah in a Trinitarian sense.

Striking examples of an unconscious reading of Trinitarian theology into Psalm 110:1 are found in commentators of the present and the last centuries. A.R. Fausset (known for his part in the Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Commentary), writing in 1866, comments on Psalm 110:1: "Jehovah said to Adonai or 'my Lord'...Jehovah in verse one represents God the Father, and Adonai, God the Son." But this is to create a potential Trinitarianism which is not in the text at all, since the Messiah is called *adoni* (my lord), not *Adonai* (the Lord God).

Reginald Fuller states that "in the Hebrew [of Psalm 110:1] the first 'Lord' is the tetragrammaton [the four-letter word YHVH], the second [the king] is Adonai." Fuller goes on to say that *Adonai* may be used of an earthly ruler. But examples are not cited. In a subsequent chapter he reads the Hebrew correctly and says that the second "lord" of our text is *adoni*. The confusion of *Adonai* with *adoni* is compounded when Fuller questions whether the New Testament church would have conceded to Jesus a title which was reserved for Deity. But *adoni* was not a title for Deity! It referred to the king, and supremely to the Messiah, as God's legal agent.

The writer of the world-famous *International Critical Commentary* on Luke reports the second lord of Psalm 110:1 as *Adonai*. This, if true, would inform us that God speaks to God. The error is quite obvious because the Hebrew *adoni*, my lord, is never in all of its 195 occurrences a title of Deity!

Dr. V.A. Spence Little misreads the Hebrew of Psalm 110:1, explaining the verse: "The Lord [Jehovah] saith unto My Lord (Adonai), Sit thou at My right hand." He argues for the Deity of the Messiah when he states that Jesus "definitely implied that this divine Name, Adonai, indicated Himself (Matt. 22:43-45)." The argument is based, however, on an inaccurate reporting of the Hebrew

text. The precise opposite is given by Psalm 110:1. God speaks not to a second Deity, but to the man Messiah.

John Stott defends Chalcedonian Christology when he maintains that because early Christians addressed Jesus as *kurios* they meant that he was God, since *kurios* was the LXX translation of the divine name. However, this is to overlook the fact that *kurios* was also the translation of Psalm 110:1's *adoni* which was never a title for Deity. *Kurios* (lord), as used of Jesus, could most appropriately designate the lord Messiah as distinct from the Lord God (see Luke 2:11; Rom. 16:18; Col. 3:24).

The celebrated *Smith's Dictionary of the Bible* shows how pervasive is this fundamental confusion of the two Lords. The dictionary makes the claim that Peter's use of the title "Lord" for Jesus in Acts 2:36 establishes his Deity. "After the ascension the Apostles labored to bring the Jews to the knowledge that Jesus was not only the Christ, but was also a Divine person, even the Lord Jehovah." Psalm 110:1 is then quoted as proof of this amazing assertion: "St. Peter, after the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost by Christ, says, 'Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord (*kurios*, Jehovah) and Christ.'"

It is only in a footnote that a later editor corrects the obvious and amazing flaw in the argument: "In ascribing to St. Peter the remarkable proposition that 'God hath made Jesus Jehovah,' the writer of this article appears to have overlooked the fact that *kurios* ('Lord') in Acts 2:36 refers to *to kurio mou* ('to my Lord') in verse 34, quoted from Psalm 110:1, where the Hebrew correspondent is not Jehovah but *adon* [actually *adoni*], the common word for 'lord' or 'master.'"

The recovery of the Old Testament as the basis of apostolic Christianity will put an end to the age-old desire of commentators to find in the text of Scripture cherished beliefs dating from the post-biblical councils. The misreading of Psalm 110:1 as support for the Deity of Jesus is the symptom of a widespread confusion over the identity of the two Lords. The vice-like grip of tradition causes even scholars to read into the Bible what they expect to find there! It is a mistake to claim that Jesus is Jehovah when in fact he is the Messiah appointed to that supreme office by Yahweh. The *Smith's Bible Dictionary* footnote deserves to become a headline summoning us to belief in Jesus as the Messiah, not God. And in the Jesus who as a Jew faithful to his heritage did not budge one inch from his conviction that "the Lord our God is one Lord" (Deut. 6:4, affirmed by Jesus in Mark 12:29).

A current discussion of Jesus in relation to the One God has persisted. "Giants" of Christology battle over 1 Corinthians 8:4-6 where it has been alleged that Paul "expands" the Shema ("Hear, O Israel") by including Jesus in it. The argument is put this way: God is the

Father but the Lord in the "one Lord" of the Shema is Jesus! This is an astonishing attempt to derail the strict monotheism of Scripture. It could never have been advanced if the careful distinction between the "lords" of Psalm 110:1 had been given the weight it deserves. Where scholars normally busy themselves with the exact meaning of the words of Scripture in the original languages, discussion of Psalm 110:1 has turned a blind eye to the Yahweh/*adoni* distinction. In many cases the second lord has been carelessly reported as *Adonai*! Is this a subconscious desire to hold to a traditional Trinitarian belief in God as three Persons?

Surely the time must have arrived for the massive influence of Psalm 110:1 on New Testament Christology to be fully acknowledged, and necessary corrections to false arguments based on the failure to distinguish Deity titles from non-Deity titles be made. Jesus is called "our Lord" scores of times in the New Testament. He is officially the Christ and thus the "Lord Christ" some 550 times. When in 1 Corinthians 8:4-6 Paul places Jesus next to God, Paul carefully distinguishes the Father as the One God of the Shema (Deut. 6:4) from the Lord Jesus Christ, i.e. our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Messiah. "Our lord Jesus Christ" is the constant echo of the "my lord [Christ]" of Psalm 110:1. "Our lord Jesus Christ" could not possibly be Yahweh Himself, since no one speaks of "our Yahweh" or "my Yahweh."

The New Testament is not a Trinitarian document. It is a strictly a unitarian document reflecting the central creed of Jesus who acknowledged the One Lord (Yahweh) of the biblical creed (Mark 12:29) in complete agreement and with the full approval of a Jewish scribe! Paul affirms the Shema with equal conviction, realizing too the amazing exaltation of the man Messiah Jesus, the unique mediator between the One God and mankind.

Over the years I have accumulated a lot of very candid comments from Trinitarian and other writers. They must demonstrate to the open-minded that the ancient creeds, which were based on philosophical and not biblical terminology, need to be replaced by the straightforward credal statements of Jesus and Paul.

Here are some of those telling quotations. Your friends should be encouraged to think about them:

*International Critical Commentary* (John 1-4), 2009, p. 51:

"Since most readers of the gospel of John approach the gospel with a firm belief in the Nicene dogma of the Holy Trinity, a plea for caution is here imperative. Those who listened to Jesus during his life-time [and the warning should apply to those who desire to listen to him today] did not come already endowed with faith in a Trinitarian Godhead, nor did those who heard the preaching of the Apostles; it was not a matter of teaching people who already believed in a Holy Trinity that one of

those divine persons had become a human being. Neither in Judaism nor elsewhere is there any trace of such a belief." *Nor is there a trace of such teaching in Jesus, who stood solidly on the creed of Israel, Mark 12:28-34.*

Hugh Anderson, *New Century Bible Commentary* on Mark, p. 280. Mark 12:29:

"We must suppose that the Markan form goes back to oral tradition passed on by a Church that did not any longer recite the Shema [**they gave up on Jesus' creed!**]. But here at least in his statement of the first commandment **Jesus stands foursquare within the orbit of Jewish piety. [Why do we not follow him?] Jesus' statement consists entirely of an almost word for word citation of two Old Testament texts Deuteronomy 6:4 and Leviticus 19, the former at the heart of Jewish piety and both much canvassed by the rabbis.**"

*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Vol. 4, pp. 133, 134) on **Logos (word)**:

"Jesus Christ is the incarnate form [embodiment] of the Logos...Grace and truth are the nature of the logos [Paul speaks of grace and truth and logos]. They are the content of the revelation [**it**, the logos] given in Jesus Christ (v. 17b) **which** replaces the Mosaic *nomos*, the Torah [David calls the Torah logos also]...The terms logos (word) and nomos (law) are interchangeable in Psalm 119. The statements **concerning the pre-existence and majesty of the Torah** are now intentionally heaped upon **the logos (John 1:1)**. It was in the beginning with God. **It** was with God and was God, or divine. All things were made by [through] **it**. In **it** was life. **It** was the light of man. In the rabbis' theses are sayings about the Torah. But they are now statements about Christ. In him the eternal word of God and the word of creation, the word of the Law is not just passed on ('given') but enacted (*egento*)."

Dr. John A.T. Robinson on John 17:3:

"In the first place it should be noted that John is as undeviating a witness as any in the New Testament to the fundamental tenet of Judaism, of **unitary monotheism** (Rom. 3:30; James 2:19). There is one true and only God (John 5:44; 17:3). Everything else is idols (1 John 5:21). In fact nowhere is **the Jewishness of John [and of Jesus]**, which has emerged in all recent study, more clear. The only possible exception is in 1 John 5:20, where 'this is the true God' could grammatically relate not to the Father, but to the immediately preceding words 'His Son Jesus Christ,' though the 'his' in 'His Son' must refer to 'the one who is true,' that is God the Father, as everywhere else [including Malachi 2:10: 'Do we not all have one Father? Has not one God created us?'].

"The ambiguities of phrasing in the Johannine epistles are notorious, but I find it very difficult to be persuaded by such as Schnackenburg, Bultmann and Brown that it is Christ who is being designated as 'the

true God' [contradicting John 17:3 and the rest of the Bible!]. I am convinced with Westcott, Brooke and Dodd that the remaining Johannine usage, particularly 'This is the true God, this is eternal life' (1 John 5:20) and 'This is eternal life, to know You who alone are true God' (John 17:3) which I believe the former deliberately echoes, **requires the reference to be to the Father**. There is also the parallel in 2 John 7 where 'this is the deceiver and the Antichrist' must refer to the secessionists and not to the immediately preceding words 'Jesus Christ coming in the flesh.'"◇

## Comments

"We read the *Focus on the Kingdom* cover to cover every issue. It so firms up our beliefs in the One God, His coming Kingdom, and Jesus' role in our life." — *Arkansas*

"God bless this ministry. Please keep speaking the truths of God's word. And we are one in heart with you about God not wanting us to be bombing and murdering in other parts of the world or here in the U.S. May God bless all of you at Restoration Fellowship until the appearing of Jesus our Lord." — *Washington*

"I've watched several of your debates and related videos over the past week and am extremely grateful for your bold and rational voice. I've been looking for Christian unitarians to fellowship with for some time now but don't know of any. All my friends and their churches are Trinitarian and they don't know what to make of me. I've been called a heretic by pastors and it really hurts. My friends just pray for me." — *California*

"From a baby I was exposed to the supposed 'things of God.' Being taken to Sunday School and Church, I like most was indoctrinated with error. I knew there was something more to this 'God' thing so I set my mind and heart to find truth. That quest has led me around from pillar to post gleaning from all sources available, leaving no stone unturned as I found out early on that someone even learned something from a donkey. Anyway...you were along that path and I thank God for the few like you, sir. There have been far more promoting and propounding sickening, disgusting error in my path than I should have desired. However this has only the more reinforced the truth for me. I'm 55 and don't know too awful much, but thanks to God, His Word and a few fine folks like you I get by."

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