

Focus on the Kingdom

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Anthony Buzzard, editor

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23rd Theological Conference May 1-4, 2014

Simpsonwood Conference Center, Norcross, GA

Please join us for what promises to be a quite exceptional gathering of passionate Kingdom and biblical unitarian believers! The truth of the Kingdom and the One God is increasingly impacting the lives of people in various countries. Our team effort is required for maximum effect. It is vitally important for believers in the One God, Jesus as Messiah, Son of God, and the Gospel of the Kingdom to gather for purposes of mutual blessing and encouragement. We really need you to be there as a blessing for us all. The Abrahamic promise is that the seed of Abraham would not only be blessed but be a blessing. We look forward to seeing you!

To register for the conference please call Atlanta Bible College at 800-347-4261 or 678-833-1839 or mail the form on the back page by **April 4**. The non-refundable deposit is \$50 per individual or couple.

Registration deadline: April 4 Conference Cost

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

Single	Couple Rate	Double (per person)	Triple (per person)	Quad (per person)
\$382	\$590 per couple	\$305	\$278	\$250

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 1	1:00 pm	3:30 pm
Simpsonwood to Airport		
Sun., May 4	1:00 pm	

Please arrange your arrival time on Thursday early enough to catch one of the two shuttle runs. On Sunday, May 4, 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 The address is 4511 Jones Bridge Circle NW, Norcross, GA 30092.

The Problem of the Trinity: The “Monstrous Dilemma” Between Modalism and Tritheism

by David Kemball-Cook, England

The famous problem of the Trinity is that no way can be found of defining a Trinity with three distinct Persons of equal divinity which does not also imply three different gods. If the Persons are truly distinct, with separate consciousnesses, wills, memories and emotions, and they are each divine, then they are three different gods (tritheism). If an attempt is made to unite the Persons together more strongly than by possession of a common divine nature, then the distinctness of the Persons is lost and the result is one God with different personal manifestations, properties or ways of being (modalism). It is this “monstrous dilemma” which Gregory of Nyssa¹ (and thousands of theologians since) struggled to resolve. There are three confusions and/or ambiguities in Trinitarian definitions which hide the impossibility of resolving the dilemma.

To show these confusions we will use the following as a typical definition of the Trinity:

- (A) God is one Being
- (B) There are (exactly) three Persons in this one God
- (C) The Persons are distinct from each other
- (D) Each Person is God
- (E) The Persons share the Being of the one God

The key terms “Person,” “is God” and “Being” are each ambiguous.

The Ambiguity in “Person”

The ambiguity in “Person” is between a “weak” sense as a sort of mode or appearance, and a “strong” sense, truly distinct individuals with their own consciousnesses. In the former case the result is some kind of modalism. However the classical Trinity needs “Persons” in a “strong” sense, for the reason that it depends on literal interpretation of verses like John 17.5 to argue that “the eternal Son” existed before he was born. This literal

¹ Gregory of Nyssa, *Answer to Abablius: On Not Three Gods*. <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2905.htm>

interpretation presupposes that “the eternal Son” has a distinct consciousness and memory from that of “the Father.”

The Ambiguity in “is God”

(D) Each Person is God could mean either that each Person is Yahweh, a statement of numerical identity, or that each Person is divine, a statement of generic identity.

(D1) Each Person is Yahweh

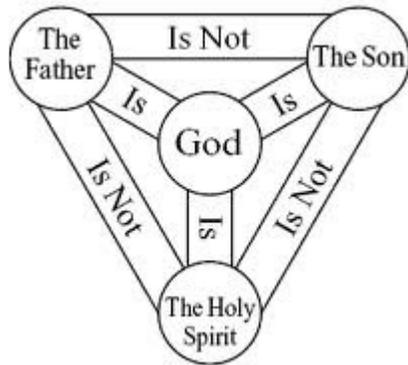
If each Person is Yahweh, then all three Persons must logically be the same individual. This would contradict three distinct “Persons” in the strong sense, and thus would only be consistent with a weak sense of “Person.” The result is modalism.

or

(D2) Each Person is divine

If each Person is divine in the sense of sharing the same divine nature, then it would imply that the Persons have to be distinct in the strong sense. The result is tritheism.

The “Shield of the Trinity” diagram is a good example of this ambiguity.



The “is not” statements use the “is” of numerical identity in asserting that “the Father” is not the same individual as “the Son” (and most would not disagree). The ambiguity lies in the “is” statements. There are two possibilities:

1) The “is” statements mean that the Father, the Son and the Spirit are each Yahweh (numerical identity). Then the Persons must be identical with each other, which contradicts the “is not” statements.

2) The “is” statements mean that the Father, the Son and the Spirit are each divine (generic identity). Then there is no contradiction, but there are now three distinct Persons, each of whom is divine, i.e. three gods.²

² Philosophers have worked hard to try to find a way in which three distinct divine Persons are not three gods. Three such defenses of the Trinity are the “relative identity”

The Ambiguity in “Being”

The ambiguity in “Being” concerns **(A) God is one Being** and **(E) The Persons share the Being of the one God**. These statements are the legacy of past attempts to try to find a principle of unity which ties together three distinct Persons. The meaning of “Being” in (A) must be “individual, something that exists.” The meaning of “Being” in (E) must be something that can be shared between different individuals, i.e. “essence” or “nature.” The two statements contradict each other (one individual cannot also be three individuals), but this contradiction is hidden by the ambiguity of “Being.” There seems to be a Trinitarian assumption that the use of a word in two different ways somehow obtains access to some deeper reality in which the two different meanings of the word combine together to reveal some mysterious “truth.” This, of course, is not the case. There is no mysterious reality “out there” which is both an essence and an individual.

The table below summarizes these conclusions.

	NUMERICAL IDENTITY <i>“The Father is Yahweh” “The Son is Yahweh” “The Spirit is Yahweh”</i>	GENERIC IDENTITY <i>“The Father is God” (meaning divine) “The Son is God” “The Spirit is God”</i>
Persons in “weak” sense Personal ways of manifesting (modes)	MODALISM One God manifesting in three personal ways (“Yahweh is the Father” etc.)	IMPOSSIBLE A mode cannot possess an attribute
Distinct persons in “strong” sense Different individuals	CONTRADICTION Three distinct individuals who are the same individual	TRITHEISM Three distinct divine individuals

There is no consistent definition of the Trinity which does not result in either modalism or tritheism. ✧

approach, the “social” Trinity and the “divine mystery” defense. Space precludes an examination of these here. However none of these theories are consistent with the personal God of the Bible, who shows himself as an “I” and not a “We.” There is no distinction in scripture between “being the same person as” and “being the same Being as.”

The Cruelty of State-Enforced Trinitarianism

On February 27, 380, the Roman Empire officially adopted the Trinitarian version of Christianity as the state church of the Roman Empire. Prior to this date, Constantius II (337-361) and Valens (364-378) had personally favored Arian or semi-Arian forms of Christianity, but Valens' successor Theodosius I supported the Trinitarian doctrine as expounded in the Nicene Creed from the 1st Council of Nicea.

On this date, Theodosius I decreed that only the followers of Trinitarian Christianity were entitled to be referred to as Catholic Christians, while all others were to be considered to be heretics, which was considered illegal. In 385, this new legal situation resulted in the first case of many to come, in the capital punishment of a heretic, namely Priscillian, condemned to death, with several of his followers, by a civil tribunal for the crime of magic. In the centuries of state-sponsored Christianity that followed, pagans and "heretical" Christians were routinely persecuted by the Empire and the many kingdoms and countries which later occupied the place of the Empire, but some Germanic tribes remained Arian well into the Middle Ages (Wikipedia, Christian Church).

Theodosian Code XVI.1.2:

"According to the apostolic teaching and the doctrine of the Gospel, let us believe in the one Deity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in equal majesty and in a holy Trinity. We authorize the followers of this law to assume the title Catholic Christians; but as for the others, since in our judgment they are foolish madmen, we decree that they shall be branded with the ignominious name of heretics, and shall not presume to give their buildings the name of churches. They will suffer in the first place the chastisement of divine condemnation and the second, the punishment of our authority, in accordance with what the will of heaven shall decide to inflict."

We invite our readers to ponder this horrifying decree with care. You may wish to disconnect yourself from any such human authorities and side with Jesus, whose teachings alone are to be our guide and judge (see Mark 12:29; John 17:3; John 12:44ff). ✧

The Meaning of "Temple" in Revelation 11:1

Theological Dictionary of the NT (Vol. 4, p. 887). This is the state of the art lexicon of the NT Greek:

"The term *naos* (sanctuary) is used in different ways in Revelation...In Rev. 11:1 the command is 'get up and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who are worshiping in it.' **In this case we are fairly obviously to think of the earthly temple in Jerusalem**, because the distinction of the forecourt from the temple proper corresponds not only to the position prior to AD 70 [when the 2nd temple was destroyed], but also the description in Ezekiel. The temple and altar denote the sacred precincts, the altar the inner court."

F.F. Bruce, *Word Biblical Commentary* on 2 Thess. 2:3: "Elsewhere Paul speaks of the believer's body, or more often of the believing community as the sanctuary, *naos*, of God, I Cor. 3:16; II Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21, **but the picture here in II Thess. 2:3 is of a material shrine**. The *naos* is the sanctuary proper, the holiest part of the temple complex, the dwelling place of the Deity. The inner sanctuary of the Jerusalem temple, the Holy of Holies, was the throne room of the invisible presence of God of Israel, there in the house which Solomon built for him, as earlier at Shiloh (1 Sam 4:4, he was worshiped as YHVH of Hosts who was enthroned on the Cherubim, cp. Ps. 80:1; 99:1). Although no ark surmounted by cherubim was to be found in the post-exilic Holy of Holies, the Man of Lawlessness is pictured as enthroning himself there in the place of God, in the spirit of the King of Babylon who is portrayed in Isa 14:13, 14 as aspiring to 'ascend to heaven,' in rivalry to the Most High. The attempt of the Emperor Gaius (Caligula) in AD 40 to have his statue set up in the Jerusalem temple, in assertion of his claims to divinity, which the Jews refused to acknowledge, **provided a foretaste of what the final Antichrist was expected to do.**"

Bruce then goes on to compare the words of Jesus in the Olivet Discourse about the Abomination of Desolation standing where **he** ought not to (Mk. 13:14), in the holy place (Matt. 24:15).

In our day we have these words from those wanting to rebuild the sanctuary: "We are ready to restore this place to its former glory," says Richman. "And we have priests who are ready to serve in the Third Temple. That would be a much smaller miracle than the establishment of the state of Israel. Here we are, in our homeland, and we have the power to build the temple whenever we want! God must be wondering what we are waiting for" (from the Temple Mount Faithful).

The premillennarian (Jesus is coming back to introduce the Millennium) *Commentary on Revelation* by Lang (with intro by F.F. Bruce), p. 182, has this to say:

“There will be at Jerusalem a temple to be built by Messiah to be the center of worship of the living God. This is proved by those many passages: Psalm 66:1-4, 8, 12-15; Isa. 19:21; 27:13; 66:20-23; Jer. 33:14-18 Ezek. 40-48; Hag. 2:6-9; Zech. 6:12, 13; 14:9, 11; 16-21. These passages unite in foretelling that the Messiah will build a temple at Jerusalem, that priests and Levites will be there as ministers, that feasts will be kept, and the Jews and Gentiles will offer sacrifices, praise and worship. Thus shall be fulfilled the purpose of God: ‘My house will be called a house of prayer for all peoples’ (Isa. 56:6-8), which it never yet has been. The boldest ought to hesitate before emasculating this whole body of testimony, in spite of the difficulty felt by some that the resumption of sacrifices seems to conflict with the teaching of Hebrews as to the cessation of sacrifice. Bacon’s sound canon is valid in this case: that if a matter be once established by adequate evidence, no objections can overthrow it; because in such a case, belief is founded upon our knowledge, but objections upon our ignorance.

“**But that (millennial) Temple is not the one in view in Revelation 11:1**, for the latter is already there in the time of the Beast [future Assyrian antichrist], before Messiah’s coming. That a prior Temple will be built is plain from Daniel 8:9-14; 9:27; 12:11; Joel 2:15-18; Matt. 24:15 and Revelation 11:1. This last text intimates that there will be an altar, implying that sacrifices will be resumed and that there will be worshipers, including that very small remnant of Isaiah 1:9; 10:20-22 etc. and those who ‘fear Jehovah’ of whom Malachi wrote in connection with the day of wrath and who will be remembering the law of Moses, though at risk, and often at the cost of life itself (Malachi 3:16; 4:6).”✧

Antichrist and Futurism: The Early Church Fathers Were Futurists

(but certainly there was no PRE-Trib. Rapture!)

The point of this article is, amongst other items, to dispel the falsehood that the Roman Catholics invented futurism!

The earliest post-New Testament writers on prophecy were premillennial, **post-tribulational futurists**: “Until Augustine in the fourth century, the early church generally held to the premillennarian understanding of biblical eschatology. This millennialism (chiliasm) entailed a **futuristic** interpretation of **Daniel’s seventieth week**, the abomination of desolation and the personal Antichrist. And it was post-tribulational...The possibility of a **pre-tribulational rapture** of the church seems never to have occurred to any one in the early Church” (Dr.

Robert Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, 1973, p. 173).

This fact should put to rest the falsehood that futurism is an invention of Roman Catholic Jesuits, who are wrongly alleged to have attempted to turn away attention from themselves. Whatever assessment one makes of the Roman Catholic system, it is quite mistaken to say that premillennial futurism, with a future 70th week, originates in the Catholic Church.

It is interesting to observe that the distinguished premillennialist Theodore Zahn (c. 1900) states that the final evil ruler in Revelation (much of which is based on Daniel) is “without question” derived from “**the Graeco-Macedonian [kingdom] and its ‘typical’ pre-Christian antichrist, Antiochus Epiphanes**” (*Introduction to the New Testament*, Vol. III, p. 441).

In Daniel 11 and 12 it seems clear that Antiochus is a “type” of the yet future tyrant. Antiochus was a Syrian king. A Latin church father, **Lactantius** (c. 250-330 AD), clearly expected the Beast (Antichrist) to arise in **Syria**: “Another king shall arise out of **Syria**, born from an evil spirit...and he will constitute and call himself God, and will order himself to be worshipped as the Son of God, and power will be given him to do signs and wonders. Then he will attempt to **destroy the Temple of God** and persecute the righteous people; and there will be **distress and tribulation** such as there never has been since the beginning of the world” (*Divine Institutes*, Book 7, ch. 17). In chapter 16 **Lactantius** speaks of the tyrant arising “from the extreme boundaries of the **northern region.**” Another ante-Nicene father, **Victorinus** (c. 280 AD), refers **Micah 5:5** to the antichrist: “There shall be peace for our land...and they shall encircle **Assur [Assyria], that is antichrist**, in the trench of Nimrod” (*Commentary on the Apocalypse*, ch. 7). Assyria is the approximate equivalent of modern Iraq. Other areas of the Middle East could be indicated.

It is not always recognized that the seventieth “week” of Daniel 9:24-27 is taken **by Jesus** to be a period *just before his return*. Jesus places the Abomination shortly before his Second Coming (Matt. 24:15ff). Matthew 24:29 says that “**immediately after**” the tribulation initiated by the Abomination (24:15), Jesus will come back in power and glory (24:29-31). This fact is crucial to a fair reading of prophecy. Daniel expects the Abomination to appear in the seventieth “week” (Dan. 9:27). Jesus expects the Abomination (and therefore the seventieth week in which the Abomination appears) just before his return. That is futurism, as reflected, too, in the earliest premillennarian “fathers.”

That the seventieth “week” was **future** and close to the end of the age was understood in 243 AD by **Hippolytus** (*De Pascha Computus*). This fact is noted in

the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. 3, p. 606: **“The one ‘week’ [of Daniel 9:24-27] is taken off as belonging to the eschatological period in the future.”** Irenaeus also expected a **3 ½-year tribulation and a rebuilt temple** (*Against Heresies*, Book 5, chs. 25, 26): “In which [temple] the enemy shall sit, endeavoring to show himself as Christ, as the Lord also declares: ‘When you shall see the Abomination of Desolation standing in the holy place, as Daniel spoke of it’...He shall purpose to change times and laws and everything will be given into his hands until a time, times and half a time: that is **for three and a half years**, during which time, when he [antichrist] comes, he will reign over the earth...The Abomination shall be brought into **the Temple**; even until the consummation of the time shall the desolation be complete [Dan. 9:27]. Now **three years and six months constitute the half week.**” Irenaeus sees the Antichrist, not just Antiochus, in the **eighth** chapter of Daniel and quotes **Daniel 9:27** as a prophecy of the final reign of the antichrist “for three years and six months.”

The seventieth week of Daniel 9 was seen as future and close up to the Second Coming by the earliest church fathers who wrote in detail on prophecy. Montgomery (*International Critical Commentary on Daniel*, p. 394) notes that this “apocalyptic” reading of the last period of seven years **is the one found in the gospels (the teaching of Jesus), and it is adopted by Irenaeus and Hippolytus.** Commodianus refers to a future and final antichrist in these words: “Isaiah said, ‘This is the man who moves the world and so many kings and under whom the land will become a desert’...Then, doubtless the world will be finished when he appears. He himself will divide the globe into three ruling powers, when however, Nero will be raised up from hell, Elijah will first come to seal the beloved ones; at which things the region of Africa [King of the South?] and the northern nations [King of the North?], the whole earth on all sides will tremble **for seven years**. But Elijah will occupy **half of the time** and Nero the other half. Then the whole Babylon, being reduced to ashes, its embers will then advance to Jerusalem; and the **Latin conqueror** will then say, ‘I am Christ whom you always pray to.’ And indeed the original ones who were deceived combine to praise him. He does many wonders since he is **the false prophet**. Especially that they may believe him, his **image** will speak. The Almighty has given it power to appear such. **The Jews, recapitulating Scriptures from him, exclaim at the same time to the Highest that they have been deceived...**Moreover, when the Tyrant will dash himself against the army of God, his soldiery are overthrown by the celestial terror; the false prophet himself is seized with the wicked one, by the decree of the

Lord. They are handed over alive to Gehenna” (*The Instructions of Commodianus*, chs. 41, 42).

“He whom Daniel foretells would have dominion for a **time, and times, and an half**, is even already at the door, about to speak blasphemous and daring things against the Most High” (Justin, *Dialogue* 3).

“But when this **Antichrist** shall have devastated all things in this world, he will reign for **three years and six months**, and sit in **the Temple at Jerusalem**; and then the Lord will come from heaven in the clouds, in the glory of the Father, sending this man and those who follow him into the lake of fire; but bringing in for the righteous the times of the Kingdom, that is, the rest, the hallowed seventh day; and restoring to Abraham the promised inheritance, in which Kingdom the Lord declared, that ‘many coming from the east and from the west should sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob’” (Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 5:30.4).

“‘And to the woman were given two wings of the great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, where she is nourished for a **time, and times, and half a time**, from the face of the serpent.’ That refers to the one thousand two hundred and threescore days (the half of the week) during which the tyrant is to reign and persecute the Church” (Hippolytus, *De Antichrist*, 61). ✧

Dear Sir, recently I noticed this footnote in the *Catholic Study Bible* on John 17:3: “This verse was clearly added in the editing of the gospel as a reflection on the preceding verse. Jesus nowhere else refers to himself as Jesus Christ.” Are there perhaps older manuscripts of John to verify or correct this footnote?

My response: Thanks for your note on John 17:3. Be very careful! There is absolutely **no** evidence for any addition here. There are no Greek manuscripts which omit this verse. Even if it was edited, for which there is no evidence, it was and is part of Scripture.

This is a very embarrassing verse for the Roman Catholic and other systems since it shows that Jesus was a unitarian, not a Trinitarian.

How then could Jesus belong to that Church? Could he sign a Trinitarian faith statement in good faith?

John 17:3: “You, Father, are the only one who is true GOD.” This has the status of a centrally important creed like Mark 12:29. It is the key to everything. The words of Jesus are our judge (John 12:44ff, Acts 17:30-31). Cling to that truth.

The Current Battle over Who Jesus Is in Relation to God

Dr. McGrath on 1 Corinthians 8:4-6: “The *shema* clearly identifies LORD (rendering the tetragrammaton) with God. That Paul could identify Jesus with LORD in passing, without explaining it or defending it, seems very unlikely indeed. The fact of the matter is **that Paul does not say that there is one God, who is both Father and Son**. He says rather that there is one God and *also* one Lord. The fact that a human figure is called ‘lord’ does not of course imply that for Paul God is thereby divested of His Lordship...The nature of the relationship between God and the lord next to him has for too long been assumed and is in **desperate need of clarification**” (*The Only True God*, pp. 39, 40).

Dr. James Dunn, *Did the First Christians Worship Jesus?* (extracted from p. 93-146)

“The question, ‘Was Jesus a monotheist?’ has a slightly shocking ring for those brought up in the Christian tradition. It conjures up fanciful pictures of Jesus engaged in the great debates of the fourth and fifth centuries on God as Trinity and the possibility of his refusing to affirm the Nicene Creed or even siding with Jews and Muslims of later centuries in accusing Christians of tri-theism. But after the initial jolt, the appropriateness of the question in reference to the first-century Jesus soon asserts itself...Whether Jesus would have approved the worship subsequently given to him is a question almost impossible to answer clearly and finally [!]. **Hurtado does not think it necessary for Jesus to have thought and spoken of himself in the same terms as his followers thought and spoke of him in the decade subsequent to his crucifixion**, although he also notes that most Christians probably think that there was **some degree of continuity between** what Jesus thought of himself and subsequent Christology (*Lord Jesus Christ*, p. 9).

The question “should not be ignored...The question can be posed legitimately and meaningfully to the extent of asking whether Jesus would have shared the common beliefs of his fellow Jews of the time and would have affirmed that ‘the Lord our God is one Lord’ (Deut. 6:4). And if we can further inquire into Jesus’ teaching in reference to God and draw legitimate inferences in this connection from the Jesus tradition, we will be well on the way to answering the question, to the extent that an answer is possible at this distance and time [note the skepticism about certainty and truth typical of a liberal scholar!].

“We can probably infer that Jesus was brought up by pious parents...A pious upbringing would include the tradition of reciting **the Shema** regularly...We can probably assume that Jesus was brought up to attend the

local synagogues Sabbath by Sabbath...That this included the conviction and regular affirmation that God is one is a corollary hard to escape...What was Jesus’ own theology, his own teaching about God and the worship of God? Most immediately striking is the fact that Jesus evidently drew upon **the Shema** in his own teaching. According to Mark 12:28-31, when asked what is the first commandment, Jesus responded by citing the **Shema** in total...**For Jesus the Shema was evidently fundamentally determinative of the whole orientation of life**. It is not the case that Jesus’ ethic can be boiled down to love of neighbor. On the contrary, the implication is that the two commands go together, and perhaps also that the second is only possible in long-term reality as the corollary to the first...We may add the information already mentioned...‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only,’ and...‘Why do you call me good: No one is good but God alone’ (Mark 10:17-18).

“The implication is clear that **for Jesus God alone is worthy of worship and of such devotion, because God alone is the source and definition of all goodness**...[God’s name is to receive] absolute respect; anything less will simply mean that his name is not apprehended, and God is not known. This is also entirely of a piece with the affirmation that God is one, that Yahweh is alone Lord...

“No one can have any doubt that the main theme and emphasis of Jesus’ preaching was **‘the Kingdom of God’**...It is hard to avoid any conclusion other than that the **Shema** continued to be **of central importance for Jesus during his mission and in the teaching** he both gave and lived out. Which also means that the conviction that God was one continued to be **axiomatic for Jesus**, a core principle from which he drew his inspiration and instruction. In short, it is hardly possible to avoid giving an affirmative answer to the question that heads this section. Yes, **Jesus was a monotheist**. [But it was not a so-called Trinitarian monotheism! Jesus was NOT a Trinitarian.]

“A key verse which shed much light for [the disciples] and that evidently informed and shaped the earliest Christian reflection...was Psalm 110:1. **This verse runs like a gold thread through much of the New Testament, and is so interwoven into the language of the New Testament writers that it evidently was a primary starting point or stimulus for the strong strand of New Testament christology summed up in the confession, ‘Jesus is Lord.’** The title (‘lord’) in itself did not necessarily signify anymore than the status of a (human) master to his servant or slave...Hurtado pays relatively little attention to Psalm 110:1, only briefly in *Lord Jesus Christ*.

“The results of this survey are astonishing...This was Jesus of Nazareth, **who affirmed the same monotheistic**

creed as they [the disciples] did...So when we transpose our findings into an answer to our central question, the dominant answer for Christian worship seems to be that the first Christians did not think of Jesus as to be worshiped in and for himself. He was not to be worshiped as wholly God, or fully identified with God...Christian monotheism, if it is to be truly monotheism, has still to assert that only God, only the one God, is to be worshipped" (pp. 93-97, 144).

Jesus said it well: "You, Father, are the only one who is true God" (John 17:3; Mark 12:29). ✧

Comments

"In March 2008 I felt that Jesus said to me, 'My people have forgotten what I came to say, please remind them.' I thought I was totally incompetent to be given such a task since I had no background in theology, and being Methodist I wasn't well versed in the Bible! Probably this was a test because it happened a few months after reading Jeremiah 29:13-14, and praying, 'God, I want to find you, show me who you are.' I thought God could help me understand what was happening in my life. I then proceeded to read the Gospels and realized that Jesus was focused on the Kingdom of God, but that didn't really help either because it wasn't clear what I was to do with the information. My prayer has always been to get revelation on what it is that we have forgotten as believers. I was therefore so excited when I got the answer on 1 January 2014 on your website. Since then I have read most of the articles and am listening to the audios. I feel this is the answer after 6 years of searching and praying. This is definitely a message people must hear because it gives such hope! It explains why the first-century Christians when fed to the lions were fearless. They had the hope of the resurrection! Reading the New Testament with the idea of the Kingdom and substituting the Kingdom of God for the word, the gospel, mystery of the gospel, the Truth, the gospel of Christ etc. gives the message a completely different slant. It also helps to see that all the Apostles had this at the center of their teachings. Even what is preached as the Gospel of Grace by Paul is in effect the Gospel of the Kingdom of God (**Acts 20:24-25**), but it has been so terribly distorted! There is so much I could say about how this understanding has clarified a lot of things for me. Thank you so much again." — *South Africa*

"I am e-mailing you to let you know how much I appreciate your work. I have been studying the doctrine of the Trinity for the last 2-3 years and I have learned more on the topic from you than any other theologian, clergy, or teacher. I have only been lucky enough to read one of your books so far, but I thoroughly enjoyed it and plan on buying another in the near future. I would also

like to compliment you on the excellent job you have done getting information online. Your online videos are wonderful. I especially enjoyed your debate against James White and Michael Brown. The short videos are nice when I am looking for some quick insight on a specific topic, whether it is on the Trinity or something else. It is great that you are taking advantage of technology to spread the truth. Although I was never a believer in the Trinity doctrine, I still have learned and benefited from your words. Until my later teenage years, the topic of the Trinity never came up. I had read the Bible the whole way through when I was about twelve, but the idea of Jesus being God never crossed my mind. I was shocked about seven years ago when I learned the majority of Christian denominations held to the Nicene creed. I never thought Jesus was God, but I still didn't fully understand him. Bad Bible translations and Trinitarian clergy had got the idea in my head that Jesus had a personal pre-existence somewhat similar to angels. Although it took some time, your arguments persuaded me otherwise. Lastly, I would like to tell you that I believe your work is very important and I think you are really making an impact, even if it is not immediately seen. Unfortunately we have centuries of mistakes to undo and it will certainly take time. With the work that you and others are doing, I am hopeful that people will learn and come to believe that the lord Jesus is the Messiah and Son of the one true God. Thank you again for all of your hard work." — *Ohio*

"I came to the Messiah back in 2002 in a correctional facility. Before coming to the real truth I studied many different religions and their historical backgrounds with what little resources that were available. It's not like you can just go to the library and pick out a book; we were limited in our resources. However, I wanted to know the truth about our Savior. I was taught all the Trinitarian doctrines and shown all the verses used in support of this teaching. I couldn't grasp this understanding. Before I came to be a believer, I knew there was a God and He had a Son. That was pretty much it for me; then people would say Jesus was God and that did not settle too well in my heart, so I prayed to the heavenly Father and asked for spiritual truth in who exactly the Father was and who His Son is. I asked for the real truth not so I could use it to my advantage and say bad things about how other people believe, but to be able to show the truth of who the Son actually was and is. My wife came out from a Seventh Day Adventist background and life. We met at a Messianic Assembly in 2007 and started talking. She had all kinds of questions about the Father and Son. She was being led to the real truth and we started to click with our thinking. At first she thought I was talking weirdo, then she started grasping what the holy spirit had been teaching her." — *Michigan*

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February, 2014

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