

# Focus on the Kingdom

Vol. 16 No. 6

Anthony Buzzard, editor

March, 2014

## 23rd Theological Conference May 1-4, 2014

Simpsonwood Conference Center, Norcross, GA

### REGISTRATION DEADLINE: FRIDAY, APRIL 4

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. 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.

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.

#### 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](http://www.simpsonwood.org) The address is 4511 Jones Bridge Circle NW, Norcross, GA 30092.

### This Is Very Easy and Free from the Severe Complexities of Trinitarianism:

“There is **one** God, the Father...There is no other God except Him” (1 Cor. 8:4, 6). “You, Father, are the only **one** who is true God” (Jesus in John 17:3).

Then Paul said, “There is **one** Lord Messiah” (1 Cor. 8:6), the Lord Messiah who was **born** in Bethlehem (Luke 2:11). He was promoted to the supreme position next to God. Peter said, “God has *made him* both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.” Peter cites Psalm 110:1 to prove his point and define “lord” (see Acts 2:34-36). God cannot be born and God is not promoted to a position! The second lord of Psalm 110:1 is *adoni*, my lord, which is never a title of Deity.

Paul again in an explicit creedal statement: “There is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the **man** Messiah Jesus.” Jesus is the second Adam (man). Jesus is the head of the new creation and to make him an angel or GOD Himself is to throw away the prize and choice, elect, of God, the great, sinless prince of the human race.

There are 1300 examples of “GOD” = the Father and not Jesus, in the NT. There is not one example in the Bible of this idea: “There is one God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.” The word GOD in Scripture never means a Triune GOD. So no one in the Bible, who wrote “God,” meant a Triune God. Does this not strongly suggest that the Bible writers were not Trinitarians?

Do you see how Jesus first affirmed the most important command of all: “The Lord our God is one Lord” or “Lord alone” (Mark 12:29)? Next Jesus described the relationship **to the Messiah** of that one God. Jesus is the son of David, the “my lord” of Psalm 110:1, about which Jesus had questioned them, and used Psalm 110:1, as we should, to settle all problems.

Paul did exactly the same. First he echoes Jesus exactly and with the precise wording of a creed: “There is for us one God, the Father, and no other God except him.” Then Paul declared his belief in “one Lord Messiah Jesus,” evidently the second lord (Messiah) of Psalm 110:1.

Jesus and Paul are both solidly rooted in the strict monotheism of Israel, which was never a Trinitarian “monotheism.” So then ask your friends to engage this question without dodging or pivoting! Try this at various blogs, websites, etc. This will help to get the now silenced conversation going. Nothing is more important than the

identity of God and Jesus. Ask this question at any website dealing with Scripture:

“Sirs, Since Jesus affirmed the Shema in Mark 12:29 (with a Jew agreeing), was he not obviously in line with the orthodox, non-Trinitarian view of God? Or did the Shema present a Trinitarian creed? Thanks for an answer.”

Do send us any responses you receive. ✧

## The Shema: The Creed of Jesus

by Sean Finnegan, New York

A few weeks ago I taught on “The Shema.” In preparation for this teaching I researched the various Jewish traditions surrounding the central creed of Israel. But before we go any further, do you know what “the Shema” is? The word “Shema” is the imperative form of a Hebrew word meaning “hear” or “listen,” and it is the first word in Deuteronomy 6.4. Here is the section from the Bible:

“Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates” (Deut. 6.4-9).

The first point is that “**the LORD is our God.**” The words “the LORD” are how most translations indicate the name of God — Yahweh, as opposed to “the Lord,” which is a title, not God’s personal name. Because of sensitivity to the Jewish people who believe the name should not be pronounced (though I have never found their arguments convincing) the translators of nearly all English Bibles translate God’s name — Yahweh — as “the LORD” with all capitals. So this is step one: Yahweh is *our* God, not Apis, Hathor, Ra, Nut, Set, Issis, Baal, Asherah, Dagon, Chemosh, nor even Jesus, but Yahweh. Yahweh is the only God for Israel — there are no other Gods for us other than Yahweh “our God.” Paul, the Rabbi confirms this when he says:

“Therefore concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that **there is no God but one.** For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, yet **for us there is but one God, the Father,** from whom are all things and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we exist through him” (1 Corinthians 8:4-6).

In other words, there may be other “so-called gods” but *for us* there is only one God — the Father. Furthermore, there is one lord — Jesus the Messiah. Thus, Paul appends *alongside* the Shema a statement about Jesus, but not in such a way that it infringes upon the simple declaration of Yahweh’s oneness as our God. The lord Jesus has a separate office — lord. It is quite clear that we have **one God** and one lord. Our one God is the Father and our lord is Jesus the Messiah.

Back to the Shema. The second point is equally simple: “**The LORD is one!**” Yahweh is one. Yahweh is indivisible. He is a singular being who cannot be fragmented. When Jesus quoted the Shema he said, “Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord” (Mark 12:29). Many theologians have tried for many years to make the word “one” mean “three” unsuccessfully. Fortunately, the word “one” is not at all a fuzzy word, for it is the cardinal number — the word that someone would start with when counting. Yahweh is one, not two, not three. This simple irrefutable point is highlighted by the tens of thousands of singular pronouns and verbs used of God. God is a “he,” not a “they.” When he speaks he does not say “we” but “I.” This point is emphatic in Deuteronomy and Isaiah:

“To you it was shown that you might know that the LORD, He is God; there is no other besides Him...Know therefore today, and take it to your heart, that the LORD, He is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other” (Deut. 4:35, 39).

“Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, and the one who formed you from the womb, ‘I, the LORD, am the maker of all things, stretching out the heavens by Myself and spreading out the earth all alone’” (Isa. 44:24).

“I am the LORD, and there is no other; Besides Me there is no God. I will gird you, though you have not known Me, that men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun that there is no one besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other, the One forming light and creating darkness, Causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the LORD who does all these...For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (He is the God who formed the earth and made it, He established it and did not create it a waste place, but formed it to be inhabited), ‘I am the LORD, and there is none else’” (Isaiah 45:5-7, 18).

“Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me” (Isaiah 46:9).

The Scriptures are unmistakably clear on this point (and there are many more verses which could be quoted to demonstrate the case). Yahweh alone is God. He is an “I,” not a “We” and He is very particular to get this point across to his people. He wants them to know “I am Yahweh, and there is none else.” But the Shema does not

end in Deuteronomy 6:4; it continues to verse 5 which says: “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might” (Deut. 6:5).

Just as Deuteronomy 6:4 tells us who our God is and how many He is, verse 5 tells us what our proper action is towards Him. We are to love Him with *everything*. Not just our heart and strength but with our very lives! We love Yahweh our God with our emotions, our actions, our entire beings. In fact, this second part of the Shema is *impossible* without the first part. For if there are three who are God then we can never love any of them with everything. At best we could love each of them equally (one third to each). However, the advantage of *strict* monotheism is that we can fix our single-hearted focus on Yahweh and love Him single-mindedly — with every fiber of our being.

In my research into the Shema and how the Hebrew people have clung to this simple, central creed, I came across an incredible story about a second-century Jewish martyr. His name was Rabbi Akiva, and he may be familiar to you because he hailed Simon Bar Kokhba as the Messiah in the second Jewish revolt which ended in disaster in AD 135.

Well, anyhow, after the failed revolution of the Jews against Rome, the policy was set that the Torah (the Law) could no longer be taught on pain of death. Rabbi Akiva loved God so much that he taught Torah despite the Roman law forbidding it. When the Romans found out, they sentenced him to a painful death. They took a large iron comb and began to scrape off his 90-year-old flesh. When Rufus condemned the venerable Akiva to the hand of the executioner, it was just the time of day to recite the Shema. Full of devotion, Akiva recited his prayers calmly, though suffering agonies; and when Rufus asked him whether he was a sorcerer, since he felt no pain, Akiva replied, “I am no sorcerer; but I rejoice at the opportunity now given to me to love my God ‘with all my life,’ seeing that I have hitherto been able to love Him only ‘with all my means’ and ‘with all my might,’” and with the word ‘One!’ he expired” (Yer. Ber. ix. 14b, and somewhat modified in Bab. 61b). Akiva wanted to be able to love God with everything, which included the idea of loving God to the point of pouring out his soul to death.

Jewish Encyclopedia of 1906: “It [the Shema] is the last word of the dying in his confession of faith. It was on the lips of those who suffered and were tortured for the sake of the Law. R. Akiva patiently endured while his flesh was being torn with iron combs, and died reciting the ‘Shema.’ He pronounced the last word of the sentence, ‘Echad’ (one) with his last breath (Ber. 61b). During every persecution and massacre, from the time of the Inquisition to the slaughter of Kishinef, ‘Shema’

Yisrael’ have been the last words on the lips of the dying.”

Indeed, the Shema is the precious confession of faith that Yahweh is our God, that He is one, and that we are to love Him with everything even if faced with torture and death.

But, that’s not all! The Jewish understanding of the Shema includes not only Deuteronomy 6:4-5 but also verses 6-9: “These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates” (Deut. 6:6-9).

The Shema is to be on the Israelites’ hearts; it is to be taught to their children. In fact, Jewish children are taught the Shema as soon as they can learn it. Furthermore, the Shema is said at least twice daily, in the morning and in the evening. The Shema is contained in the tefillin which are black leather boxes worn on the head and arm during prayer. In this way the commandments are bound as a sign. Lastly, the Shema is written on a scroll and placed in the mezuzah which is installed on the doorpost of the house.

Suffice it to say, the Shema was and is the central creed of Judaism. But, then what about us? Should Christians adopt the creed of Israel as our own creed? I have two responses to this question: one from Jesus and one from Paul.

In Mark 12:28-34 we find a scribe asking Jesus a serious question, “What commandment is the foremost of all?” Jesus replied by quoting the Shema, “Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.” Jesus then added to the Shema a second commandment (from Leviticus 19:18) when he said, “The second is this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” The Shema is the central creed for Jesus! This should not be too shocking after all, because Jesus was a Jew who lived the commandments contained in the Hebrew Scriptures. If the Shema is the creed of Judaism then of course Jesus would adopt it as his own personal creed. So, if the Shema was Jesus’ central creed and Jesus is our lord and example, should we not adopt it as our own creed? Shouldn’t we worship the same God whom Jesus worshiped? We may adopt other truths in addition to the creed of Jesus and Israel, but we may not contradict the truth contained within the Shema. In other words, we may not say God is three since the Shema asserts that our God is one individual — Yahweh — but we may add *alongside* the

Shema, as Paul did in 1 Corinthians 8:6, that Jesus is our lord Messiah.

The second response to the question of whether or not we should adopt the Shema as *our* foundational creed concerning God can be aptly summed up by these words: “Is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one” (Rom. 3:29-30).

If the God of the Shema — the God of the Jews — is our God then we do well to believe the way the Jews and Jesus have, regarding His identity, oneness, and our love of Him. If we are the people of God, then we worship the same God as the Jews, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Indeed He is also the God of Jesus who worshiped Him alone. May we be like our master. ✧

## Recovering the Birth Certificate of Jesus

The **origin** of Jesus, and thus the knowledge of who he really is, has been put into a fog in the minds of many, by traditional creeds. Most churchgoers accept as unquestionably biblical the **traditions** they are taught. But ordinary readers of the Bible, consulting Matthew and Luke and their exquisitely crafted accounts of the **origin** (Matt. 1:18, *genesis*) of Jesus, will sense immediately and without confusion or complication that Mary had a baby, supernaturally!

She certainly did not take into her womb a personage from outside. An angel did not reduce himself to a fetus and then get born. Surely no reader, without prejudice or foregone conclusion, would hear such a bizarre story in the accounts given by Matthew and Luke. Certainly one would get no hint of the later tradition that a second member of the Godhead (a strange “GOD the Son” nowhere so named in the Bible) gave up the status of eternal Deity, was reduced to a sperm or ovum and emerged in birth as the Son of God, Jesus. Surely that reading of Matthew and Luke would raise your gravest suspicions!

The embroidering of the biblical story to that fantastic degree would have to make you wonder where we got our “traditional” accounts of who Jesus is and where he came from.

It is well known that Psalm 2:7 and the same verse reflected in Psalm 110:3 (LXX, and various Hebrew manuscripts also) is a spectacularly significant piece of information about Jesus and his **origin**. We read that YHVH, the God of Israel, announced with reference to his coming Son, the Messiah, “You are my Son; **today** I have begotten you.”

Could anything be clearer than that one day, future to the time of the divine announcement, God would produce

a special Son? Does this sound as if God intended to beget a Son, *outside of time*, in eternity?

The churchgoing public, it seems to us, is remarkably complacent, if not gullible, when it accepts apparently without batting an eyelid the official church teaching that the “today” of this predicted “begetting” of a Son by GOD really **does not mean “today” at all!** Far from being any reference to **time**, “today” in Psalm 2:7 means in eternity, outside time! This is the story given to millions of patient churchgoers, and they accept it, largely without question. Little do they know that they are being offered a supersize piece of disinformation, which in all other fields would invite the vigorous protests of whistle-blowers and watchful consumer activists. But not so in church, which appears to have around it a cocoon of safety protection and immunity, insulating it against all criticism. (Where are the Megyn Kelly’s, a noted political whistle-blower on Fox News, in the arena of Bible and theology?)

How many words can you empty of their real meanings before a document becomes unintelligible? The word “beget” in the biblical languages and in English is an easy word. It means “to cause to come into existence,” “to give being to” someone, “to cause someone **to begin to be.**” We all know about the moment of conception, the miracle of new life in the womb. You cannot begin to be if you already are!

But in “church-speak” none of that easy information is allowed to prevail. With God, it is said, who is eternal, there cannot be a begetting *in time*. It must have happened outside time and before time. It must have been “an eternal generation.” It is without beginning, or as one of the architects of the Trinity doctrine said, “a beginningless beginning.” This hopelessly confusing theological proposition about a “beginningless beginning” is at the root of the traditional idea of who Jesus is and who God is. The Son had no beginning, they say. But he was begotten! This is a contradiction, and to say that God cannot beget a Son *in time*, is to tell God what He may and may not do! This is the height of foolishness.

Lucidly real and clear are the matchless accounts of the predictions about the coming Messiah, Son of God, in the OT. And the reports of the fulfillment in Matthew and Luke of this marvelous prediction in Israel in the first century are unmistakably plain as to the **origin** of the Son.

A series of “begetting,” that is, “bringing into existence” passages for Jesus, the Son of God, can be assembled from Old and New Testaments. We all know about the primal prediction of the Messiah to come as the “seed of the woman” (Gen. 3:15). This speaks of a descendant of the woman Eve. This was fulfilled when Mary conceived, gave life to a son, without the benefit of a husband.

Matthew opens his whole book (1:1), obviously recalling the *genesis* of the first book of the Bible, with “the **genesis** of Jesus Christ, son of Abraham, son of David.” Is that complicated? Obviously not. After all Isaiah 7:14 had predicted a miraculous conception in an Israelite virgin, and Matthew tells us how that ultimately happened. Isaiah 9:6 had announced that “a child has been **begotten**, a Son has been given to us [Israel].” These two statements are in parallel, and the one explains the other. So certain is the fulfillment of the event that it appears in the Hebrew Bible in the past tense — “as good as done.” This is a past tense of prophecy. The fulfillment occurred when God performed a miraculous begetting in Mary.

Then Psalm 2:7 (Ps. 110:3, LXX): “Today I have **begotten** you.” “Today I have become your Father.” David was promised an endless succession of kings and a final Messianic King and Kingdom. The star king promised (Num. 24:17-19) was to be God’s own Son: “I will be his Father and he will be my Son” (2 Sam. 7:14, suitably identified with Jesus in Heb. 1:5).

Now note what some standard evangelical textbooks state, with complete disregard for the actual words of the Bible: “Christ is the eternal Son of God. **When the title Son of God is used of Christ, it has nothing to do with his birth to Mary.** As the Son of God he was not born. He was given. That is precisely what the prophet Isaiah said of him, ‘For a child will be born to us, a Son will be given to us’ (Isa. 9:6). The term Son of God refers to Christ’s eternal relationship to the Father. He was *born* as a child to Mary” (Drs. Swindoll and Zuck, *Understanding Christian Theology*, p. 570).

**Now read Luke 1:35** and ask yourself: Is it true as stated above by leading evangelicals that “when the title Son of God is used of Christ, it has nothing to do with his birth to Mary”? Gabriel said, “Precisely because of [*diokai*] the miracle [in Mary] the child to be begotten will be called the **Son of God.**” The prophecy in Isaiah 9:6 cannot be chopped up! The promised Son was to be begotten *and* given by God. The two statements are in parallel, and the one interprets the other. Isaiah 9:6 predicts the miraculous begetting, coming into existence of the Son of God, who **began to exist** some 2000 years ago. God gave (John 3:16) His uniquely begotten Son, as we know, and this happened when Mary conceived a baby supernaturally (Matt. 1:18, 20; Luke 1:35; 1 John 5:18, not KJV). Jesus, the Son of God, has some 100 named **human** ancestors in Matthew 1 and Luke 3. ✧

## Plain Talk and Warning about God and Jesus

From Dr. James Dunn, *Did the First Christians Worship Jesus?*

“It becomes plain that the kyrios [lord] title for Jesus is **not so much a way of identifying Jesus with God**, as a way of *distinguishing* Jesus from God. It cannot be unimportant that Paul can use both kyrios Yahweh texts in reference to Christ, and at the same time can speak of God as ‘the **God of our Lord**’ (1 Cor. 3:23; 11:3). Most notable in this connection is 1 Corinthians 15:24-28. In effect it is the nearest we have in the New Testament to an exposition of the **crucial text**, Psalm 110:1, that **so influenced the first Christians...**

“[Is not the use of ‘God’ for Jesus] a step towards polytheism — Jesus as a second god beside the creator God? If ‘God,’ then how are we to make sense of the first Christians’ clear memory that Jesus called for worship to be given only to God, and himself regularly prayed to God as his God and Father?...The New Testament writers are really quite careful at this point. Jesus is not the God of Israel. He is not the Father. He is not Yahweh...Jesus of Nazareth affirmed the same monotheistic creed as [his contemporaries] did...

“If what has emerged in this inquiry is taken seriously, it soon becomes evident that Christian worship can deteriorate into what may be called Jesus-olatry...The danger is that Jesus has been substituted for God, has taken the place of the one Creator God...The first Christians did not think of Jesus as to be worshipped in and for himself. He was not to be worshipped as wholly God, or fully identified with God...A second point to be noted takes up the complementary issue of whether worship of Jesus constitutes a denial of Christianity’s claim to be a monotheistic religion” (pp. 110-111, 132, 142, 145-148). ✧

## The Future in the Middle East

**B**oth Jesus and Paul saw the need to inform their congregations about events which precede the return of the Messiah to set up his Kingdom on earth. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, “Don’t you remember that while I was with you [probably a few weeks] I used to tell you these things?” about the Antichrist, the Man of Sin entering the temple of God, claiming to be God (2 Thess. 2:3-5). Daniel 9:26-27, 12:7, 11 and 8:13, along with Matthew 24:15, Mark 13:14 and Luke 21:20, speak of the **key event** which Jesus announced as a definite sign that his return to the earth is very close: “When you see the Abomination of Desolation spoken of by Daniel (let the reader pay careful attention) standing in the holy place, where **he** ought not to (Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14),

and Jerusalem surrounded by armies (Luke 21:20), then flee to the hills if you are in Judea.”

Bible students need to pay close attention to the words of Jesus, citing Daniel the prophet. Many have been misled into accepting various false (and now past) dates for the Second Coming. Notably, Jehovah’s Witnesses were misled by the Watchtower’s failed prediction that 1914 would see the return of Jesus and the beginning of the Kingdom on earth.

Others have misunderstood Jesus to be talking about the destruction of Jerusalem and temple in AD 70. But Jesus was responding to a question about his “coming [Parousia] and the end of the age” (Matt. 24:3). The **end of the age** did not happen in AD 70. It destroys the whole teaching about Jesus’ coming back if one claims that it is all in the past! The end of the age is the future moment when the dead will be raised by the returning Messiah (Matt. 13:39-40). The Christians still alive at that time will be caught up to meet Jesus as he comes down from heaven (1 Thess. 4:13ff). The faithful of all ages will thus together escort the arriving King as he proceeds to the earth. Jesus will defeat the Antichrist, King of the North (Dan. 11), the Assyrian of 2 Thessalonians 2:8, citing Isaiah 11:4, and organize the Kingdom of God and proceed with the saints, who will go “marching in” with him. Yes, Jesus is coming back to this planet.

In 1948 Israel regained official status as a nation after nearly 2000 years (having been deprived of nationhood by Rome in AD 70). This event in 1948 was important, since it meant that the various prophecies about the future of **national Israel** could then become capable of fulfillment. But 1948 definitely did *not* see the fulfillment of the Bible’s promise of Jesus’ return and Israel’s **national repentance and faith in the Messiah**. The biblical restoration of Israel to faith in Messiah has not yet happened. But it will when Jesus returns. A major feature of the return of Messiah will be to rescue a remnant of national Israel (Rom. 9-11), as well as to grant immortality to the international “Israel of God,” the true believers (Gal. 6:16), as distinct from “Israel of the flesh” in 1 Corinthians 10:18.

To this day Israel remains largely in unbelief regarding their Messiah Jesus, who came and is coming again. Finally at the future return of Jesus a remnant of now natural, blinded Israel will repent and be granted entrance to the Kingdom. They will say to Jesus, as Jesus predicted: “Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord God” (Matt. 23:39).

Now watch how Daniel’s very realistic prophecies are taken up in the NT, and as favorites of Jesus. Daniel spoke of an interference with a rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem, a suspension of sacrifices (Dan. 12:11; 9:26-27).

In Daniel 9:26b, the correct translation of the Hebrew is “**his end**,” proving that the reference is to the future Antichrist, the wicked prince, **and not to Titus in AD 70**. Titus did not come to “his end” in the events of AD 70. He died naturally 18 years later. Thus Daniel 9:26b-27 cannot be a reference to AD 70. Jesus was asked about **the end of the age** in Matthew 24:3. The end of the age was not AD 70. “The end of the age” is the future end of this present system to be superseded by the Kingdom on earth at the future coming (*Parousia*) of Jesus.

The following translations make the very important point about Daniel 9:26b:

Common English Bible: “**his end**” (or its, the army’s end); Complete Jewish Bible, ERV, ESV, God’s Word Translation, JPS, Isaac Leeser, LXE, NAB, NET: “**his end**”; NAU, NRS, Rotherham: or **his end**; CSB: or **his**; destroy city **with prince**; NJB: “end of that prince.”

Revelation and Daniel have 8 references to the second half of the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel 9: **Dan. 9:27** = Dan. 7:25; Dan. 12:7; Rev. 12:6, 14; Rev. 13:5; Rev. 11:2, 3.

This is the final time of trouble and tribulation as the birthpangs of the arrival of the New Age of the future Kingdom of God. Zechariah 12:3 is also a key verse. This reads in the LXX (Greek version of the OT): “It will come to pass in that day that I will make Jerusalem a stone trodden on by all the nations. Everyone who **tramples** on it will utterly mock at it. And all the nations of the earth will be gathered against it.” Jesus referenced this important text in Luke 21:23-24 when he stated: “There will be great distress on the land [the Great Tribulation of Matt. 24:21] and wrath to this people [Israel] and they will fall by the edge of the sword and will be led captive into all the nations, and **Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles** until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.” The same prophecy appears again in Revelation 11:1-2: “Get up and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship in it. Throw out the court which is outside the temple [cp. Dan. 8:11-13: the sanctuary will be thrown down] and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations and they will **tread under foot the holy city** for 42 months.”

All this is an “unpacking” of Daniel’s prediction that “the prince who is to come will destroy [or corrupt] the city and sanctuary, and **his end** [the end of the wicked prince] will be with a flood [of judgment]” (Dan. 9:26).

The final period of 7 years refers to the future just before the return of Jesus. The reason for this is simple. Jesus spoke, as did Daniel, of the Abomination of Desolation standing in the holy place (Matt. 24:15). Daniel’s Abomination (Dan. 9:26-27) occurs in the final 7 years (the last half of that period), and Jesus locates that same event close to his second coming (Matt. 24:15). Jesus knew that the appearance of the Abomination was

the trigger of the final time of Great Tribulation (Matt. 24:15, 21). “**Immediately** following” the time of extreme distress (in which days it will be hard for pregnant and nursing women), “the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light...and then they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, and he will gather his elect from the four winds” (Matt. 24:29-31). None of this has happened, but every generation is to pass on the right teaching about these events, without of course setting a date in advance for the all-important appearance of the Antichrist, Abomination of Desolation, Man of Sin, who goes into the Temple and takes his seat there (2 Thess. 2:4).

That a real temple is meant has been noted by distinguished commentators at all times. It is wrong to speak of a figure of speech here. When Paul speaks of the individual Christian or the Christian community as “a temple,” he does not speak of “**the** temple of God” as in 2 Thessalonians 2:4. Since the prophecy is connected to Daniel and Jesus’ words in Matthew 24 and Revelation 11, a real temple is meant.

The earliest post-NT premillenarian believers (looking forward to the future millennium on earth) expected very reasonably that the temple in Israel had to be rebuilt. “Irenaeus [2<sup>nd</sup> century] was repeating what for him had the authority of Scripture and he may have shared the view of Hippolytus and others that the temple would be rebuilt” (Howard Marshall, *New Century Bible Commentary on II Thessalonians*, p. 191). Years before the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, commentators knew (including members of the Church of God Faith of Abraham, since 1850) that national Israel must again be in the land, if prophecy was to be fulfilled. In the same way for many years in advance, believing commentators foresaw that a temple (Rev. 11:1) would be rebuilt in Israel. The famous commentary by Jamieson, Fausset and Brown stated in 1871 that a temple had to be rebuilt in Jerusalem and that the Man of Sin, Antichrist, would set himself up as “a god” there.

The words of Jesus are the key to good understanding. “Jesus’ interpretation of his Bible proceeds from his recognition of the canon of sacred books accepted by the mainstream of Judaism of his day and his settled conviction that these writings, rightly understood, were the expression of the mind of God through faithful prophets. The exposition of the received Scripture is, then, the sum and substance of Jesus’ message...The New Testament’s use of the Old Testament lies at the heart of its theology, and it is primarily expressed within the framework of typological exposition [that is the OT has shadows and “types” of future events. Often the OT gives us direct predictions, such as the place where Jesus was born]...The interpretations of Jesus and the Apostles are the

foundation and the key to any legitimate contemporary expression of Christianity” (E. Earl Ellis, *The OT in Early Christianity*, pp. 138, 157).

Jesus’ words are found not only in the Gospels, but also in the book of Revelation, an entire prophecy of future events, as well as correction and encouragement for the churches (chapters 2, 3). ✧

### **Beware a “cop-out” view of Jesus’ words in Revelation. This is typical of a “school” to be avoided!**

Note first this skeptical approach to Scripture: “The book of Revelation says itself that it is symbolic [often an excuse for saying that words can be made to mean anything!]. To be honest no one really knows the full meaning of that book and no one should base their doctrines off of it. The Eastern Orthodox church, who read the Scriptures in Greek, study the Scriptures in Greek, and know pretty much everything about Greek (a reason why many are hopeful universalists), *stay far away from the book of Revelation*. They don’t read it during their ceremonies, and believe it is a mystery. Frankly I don’t know why it is in the Bible, but maybe God has a reason for it. There are a 100,000 books out there that interpret Revelation differently, so I ask you, which interpretation is right? Yours?! **The rest of the Bible is much easier to understand in comparison to Revelation (and that’s saying a lot since the Bible is no piece of cake)**. Let’s deal with what we can understand, namely the rest of Scripture” (from internet).

Watch out for Luther, too, who at one time said that “Christ is not preached in the book of Revelation”! He also said that the book of James was a “straw epistle.” Calvin, who wrote a commentary on Scripture, wrote no commentary on Revelation.

Revelation is a mosaic of hundreds of OT passages, and so it implies an understanding of the Hebrew prophets. There are over 50 allusions to Daniel, a book which Jesus loved. And Revelation is a message from Jesus (1:1).

## **Comment**

“First of all I’d like to thank you for all the wonderful articles and books you have made available through your website. I’ve come to realize that Jesus will never be God literally, because he never was in the beginning. He was created and had a beginning, begotten by the only ONE God, Yahweh or Adonai. And I now realize the amazing mischief created by the evil one in presenting an impossible Deity to imitate and follow! It is an impossible endeavor to try to imitate and be like ‘God the Son’ instead of following and trying to live a perfect God-life following the human Jesus. Thank you so much for gently instructing me in the right direction. May God continue to bless you and this ministry.” — *Washington*

Focus on the Kingdom  
PO Box 2950  
McDonough, GA 30253  
USA

**Focus on the Kingdom**  
March, 2014

NONPROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT NO. 46  
MCDONOUGH, GA

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

**Theological Conference • May 1-4, 2014 • Simpsonwood Conference Center, Norcross, Georgia**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone-Home \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Conference rates** (includes room, meals, snacks, conf. fee, tax):

**Single: \$382 COUPLE: \$590 Double: \$305 per person Triple: \$278 per person Quad: \$250 per person**

Room type: Single\_\_\_ Double\_\_\_ Triple\_\_\_ Quad\_\_\_ **Special meal request:** Gluten-free \_\_\_ Vegetarian \_\_\_

Roommate's name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Transportation to/from Atlanta airport? Round-trip (\$25) \_\_\_ One-way (\$15) From airport \_\_\_ To airport \_\_\_

If so, Date & Time of Arrival \_\_\_\_\_ Departure \_\_\_\_\_

Airline & Flight Number \_\_\_\_\_

Shuttle on Thurs. to Simpsonwood (Circle one) 1:00 pm 3:30 pm

Send with non-refundable deposit of \$50 per individual or couple by **April 4** to:  
Atlanta Bible College, PO Box 2950, McDonough, GA 30253