

Focus on the Kingdom

Vol. 16 No. 8

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May, 2014

The Doctrine of Pronouns Applied to Christ's Testimony of Himself (cont.)

Noah Worcester, D.D., 1827

No sincere Christian can wish it to be believed that the Messiah intentionally used deceptive language to lead his followers into error respecting his character. If he did not, his language must be interpreted on the same principles which are applicable to the language of other ambassadors sent by God to men — unless he has given an explanation himself, or by some inspired apostle. What then would be the meaning of his language of personal dependence on God, had it been used by Moses?

On the same principles too we may ask, what must be the meaning of Christ's words when he said, "*My God*"? His words "my Father and your Father, my God and your God," as clearly imply that *he* had a God as that his *apostles* had a God. But is there any sense in which the Supreme Being can say "my Father," or "my God"? Yet it was not merely once that Christ personally acknowledged that he had a God. He did so in every prayer; he did so on the cross — "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Besides, I think few will deny that when Christ used the words "*my Father*," he spoke of the very same being as when he said "my God" — and that by his Father he meant his God and our God. Every time, therefore, that Christ said "my Father," or "my God," his words implied that he himself was not the Supreme Being. How numerous then are the passages in which the Messiah clearly disclaimed all pretensions to be regarded as the Most High, the Jehovah of heaven and earth!

It will doubtless be remembered how freely unitarians have been accused of irreverence for the Scriptures, in accommodating them to their sentiments, by rejecting some passages in the common version and altering others. I do not deny that individuals may have sometimes given occasion for such a charge against themselves. But I would ask seriously whether there has been anything in the conduct of unitarians, in relation to the Scriptures, which ought to excite more astonishment and regret, than the conduct of the whole body of Trinitarians, in their manner of explaining or interpreting the whole of Christ's testimony concerning himself. More, I believe, than **a hundred distinct declarations or observations** which implied his personal dependence, or that he was **not God**, must have something of the following import attached to neutralize them, or to render them consistent with the

Trinitarian hypothesis. "Here Christ spoke only of his human nature, though he was God as well as man." Not only is the testimony of Christ thus interpolated and changed, but the testimonies of the evangelists and apostles respecting him, have shared a similar fate, that they may not contradict the Trinitarian doctrine. I have not computed the number of texts in the Apostles' testimony which clearly imply that Christ was not God; but I think they are more than two hundred. Now if such an addition or explanation is warrantable, is it not wonderful that the necessity of it never occurred to the mind of Christ nor any one of his Apostles or evangelists?

Paul, in describing the warfare between the flesh and the spirit, makes use of the following language: "For I know that in me (that is, in *my flesh*) dwells no good thing." Had he omitted the explanatory or parenthetical clause, how different would have been the meaning! Why did not the Messiah say — "Of myself, that is, **as a man**, I can do nothing" or "I can of myself, that is, of **my human nature**, do nothing"? As no such saving clause is in any instance used by Christ, or suggested by his Apostles, it has at least the appearance of being wise above what is written, for men at this day to affirm that such a clause is always to be interpolated or understood in all that Christ said importing his personal dependence.

If by asserting that Christ is God were meant no more than that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself" — that the miracles of Christ were properly the works of God; and that the doctrines and precepts of Christ were properly the words of God, which he "has in these last days, spoken to us by his Son" — I could most cordially agree. For all these ideas I firmly believe to be true. But more than this is intended by Trinitarians. **They say that Christ himself was personally God**, equal with the Father — that is, equal to *his* God and *our* God. If Paul had been of this opinion, instead of saying "God was in Christ," he might have said "God was in *God*"; and instead of saying, "I bow my knees to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," he might have said, "I bow my knees to the God and Father of our God Jesus Christ." In like manner, by the application of the Trinitarian hypothesis, almost everything that is said of the character of the Messiah, by himself or his Apostles, becomes unintelligible, or a contradiction to what their own words express. There surely is reason to question the correctness of a theory which **so palpably contradicts the testimony of Christ and his Apostles**.

Nothing, however, to be found in this discussion has been intended to impute blame, or to impeach the moral character of any of my brethren. But a hope is entertained that the subject is set in such a light as will tend to excite more candor and union among Christians.

Appendix

As I have said so much to prove that explanations were certainly necessary, reflecting the language of dependence used by our Lord, if he was indeed the independent Jehovah, some may deem it incumbent on me to assign a reason why no explanations were given of the passages which have been supposed to imply his self-existence and independence. Should this be demanded of me, I may frankly say that I do not think that it ever occurred to John that such ideas would ever be inferred from anything which he recorded as the words of Christ. The following text is, I believe, more relied on to prove that Christ was God than any others which were uttered by our Savior: "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30).

All who are acquainted with the Greek know that the word here translated **one does not mean one person or one being**, but "one thing," as one in affection, one as to interest, or having one or the same object of pursuit. So Paul says, "He who plants and he who waters are one"; and Christ, in prayer for his followers, says, "Holy Father, keep through Your own name those whom You have given me, that they may be one as we are." Again he says, "The glory which You gave me, I have given them, that *they may be one, even as we are one.*" If the Father and Son are but one being, then Christ prayed that the innumerable multitude of his followers might become one being. I may further observe that the language of Scripture must be understood according to some analogy known to men, or not be understood at all. But what analogy does the universe afford to justify us in supposing that the Son meant to say that he and his Father were one or the same being? If a king's son should use precisely the same language, in regard to himself and his father, who would even suspect that such was his meaning? As such a meaning is foreign to all analogy, we have great reason to believe that it is equally foreign to the truth. ◇

The explanation of the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity is impossibly confused and complex and it produced this comment from a learned Harvard professor, Andrews Norton:

"The doctrine of the Communication of Properties [doctrine of the two Natures in Jesus], says LeClerc, 'is as intelligible as if one were to say that there is a circle which is so united with a triangle that the circle has the properties of the triangle, and the triangle those of the circle' (*Ars Critica*, P. II. S. I. c. 9. sec. 11). It is

discussed at length by Petavius [Jesuit theologian] with his usual redundancy of learning. The vast folio of that writer containing the history of the Incarnation is one of the most striking and most melancholy monuments of human folly which the world has to exhibit. In the history of other departments of science, we find abundant errors and extravagances; but Orthodox theology seems to have been the peculiar region of words without meaning; of doctrines confessedly false in their proper sense, and explained in no other; of the most portentous absurdities put forward as truths of the highest importance; and of contradictory propositions thrown together without an attempt to reconcile them. A main error running through the whole system, as well as other systems of false philosophy, is that words possess an intrinsic meaning not derived from the usage of men; that they are not mere signs of human ideas, but a sort of real entities, capable of signifying what transcends our conceptions; and that when they express to human reason only an absurdity, they may still be significant of a high mystery or a hidden truth, and are to be believed without being understood" (Andrews Norton, *A Statement of Reasons for Not Believing the Doctrines of Trinitarians*, 1882).

W.C. Allen, MA, Oxford, on the Kingdom

The objective analysis of the Kingdom of God in Matthew, provided by the *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, ought to serve as a much-needed guide to all our thinking about the Kingdom. Show this beautiful description and definition of the Kingdom of God/Kingdom of Heaven (the heart of the saving Gospel) to your friends at every opportunity. What Matthew says of the Kingdom of God/Heaven applies to the whole Bible. Professor Allen at Oxford, a leading Hebraist, defines the Kingdom with complete accuracy:

"The Kingdom — **the central subject** of Christ's doctrine...With this he began his ministry (4:17) and wherever he went he taught this as Good News [Gospel] (4:23). The Kingdom, he taught, was coming, **but not in his lifetime**. After his ascension he would come as Son of Man on the clouds of heaven (16:17, 19:28, 24:30)...and would sit on the throne of his glory...Then the twelve Apostles would sit on twelve thrones judging [administering] the twelve tribes of Israel (19:28). In the meantime he himself must suffer and die, and be raised from the dead. How else could he come on the clouds of heaven? And his disciples were to **preach the Good News [Gospel] of the coming Kingdom** (10:7, 24:14) among all nations, making disciples by [water] baptism (28:18). The body of disciples thus gained would naturally form a society bound by common aims...Hence

the disciples of the Kingdom would form a new spiritual Israel (21:43 [Gal. 6:16; Phil. 3:3])."

The same authority goes on to say:

"In view of the needs of this new Israel of Christ's disciples...who were to await his coming on the clouds of heaven, it is natural that a large part of the teaching recorded in the Gospel should concern **the qualifications required in those who hoped to enter the Kingdom when it came...**[Thus the parables] convey some lesson about the nature of the Kingdom and **the period of preparation for it...**It should be sufficiently obvious that if we ask what meaning [the parables] had for the editor of the first Gospel...the answer must be that he chose them because...they taught lessons about the Kingdom of the heavens *in the sense in which that phrase is used everywhere else in his Gospel, of the Kingdom which was to come when the Son of Man came upon the clouds of heaven.*

"Thus the Parable of the Sower illustrates the varying reception met with by the Good News [Gospel] of the Kingdom as it is preached amongst men. That of the tares also deals not with the Kingdom itself, but with **the period of preparation for it.** At the end of the age the Son of Man will come to inaugurate his Kingdom...[Luke 21:31]. There is nothing here or elsewhere in this Gospel to suggest that **the scene of the Kingdom is other than the present world renewed, restored and purified.**"¹ ♦

Daniel 9:26b: "HIS End" A Major Key to Understanding

The point below is derived from Daniel 9:26b: "and **his end** will come with a flood." The subject of Daniel's discussion is the wicked prince who is going to "desolate the city [Jerusalem] and the sanctuary" (9:26). "His end," that is, the end of his life, will come as a result of a judgment of God which will annihilate him. My point here, in this long quotation of various translations, is that "his end" gives the correct version of the Hebrew, and "his end" cannot possibly refer to the death of Titus, the Roman general involved in destroying Jerusalem in AD 70. Titus died naturally some 18 years after destroying Jerusalem. Titus did not die supernaturally, but the future antichrist will. This is still future to us.

First Moses Stuart, *Commentary on Daniel*:

"v'kitzo, and his end; whose? The obvious grammatical answer is the end of the *nagid haba*, the prince to come. One need but compare 8:25...: *He shall be broken in pieces without [human] hand*, and to join with this 11:45, *And he shall come to his end (ad kitzo), and none shall help him*, in order to see how exactly all three of the passages agree. In all, the *end* in question follows the injuries done to the holy city and temple. Manifestly the same personage is concerned. We cannot, therefore, refer *his end* to *city* and *sanctuary*, for the suffix should then be plural; nor to *he will ruin*, i.e. the action of destroying which ends in an overwhelming. Indeed such an application would probably never have been thought of, had not that interpretation needed its aid, which makes Titus the Roman chief to be the *nagid* (prince) in this case, who is to destroy city and sanctuary. But such a construction is incompatible with grammar, and equally so with the parallel passages to which reference has been made above."

Daniel 9:26

New Jerusalem Bible: "And after the sixty-two weeks an Anointed One put to death...city and sanctuary ruined by a prince who is to come. **The end of that prince will be catastrophe** and, until the end, there will be war and all the devastation decreed."

Einheitsübersetzung, 1980: "**Er findet sein Ende in der Flut** (Translation: "He will find his end in the flood")

French Jerusalem Bible: « ...un prince qui viendra. Sa fin sera dans le cataclysme »

(Translation: "...a prince who will come. His end will be in the cataclysm.")

Traduction Oecumenique de la Bible, 1988: « **chef à venir les détruira; mais sa fin viendra...** »

(Translation: "A prince to come will destroy them, but his end will come...")

Bible en Français Courant, 1997: « **Toutefois ce chef finira sous le déferlement de la colère divine. Mais jusqu'à sa mort** il mènera une guerre dévastatrice. »

(Translation: "However this ruler will come to his end...until his death he will carry on a devastating war.")

Above we made mention of the translation in some versions: "The people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and sanctuary, and **its end** will come in the flood."

Keil (*Commentary on Daniel*) translates, as does RV, Jerusalem Bible, Jewish Publication Society OT, *International Critical Commentary on Daniel*, Peake's *Commentary*, etc., "And HIS end will come in the flood." The reference is taken to be to *the evil prince* who is to come who destroys the city and sanctuary.

Keil says: "**And his end with the flood.** The suffix '**HIS**' refers simply to the hostile prince whose end is

¹ "Matthew," *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, Vol. II, p.144-45, emphasis added. The same view of the Kingdom is expressed by this author in his commentary on Matthew (W.C. Allen, *The International Critical Commentary, St. Matthew*, T & T Clark, 1907, pp. lxvii-lxxi).

emphatically placed in contrast to his coming (agreeing with Kranichfeld, Hofmann and Kliefeth). **Preconceived views as to the historical interpretation of the prophecy lie at the foundation of all other references.** The Messianic interpreters who find in the words a prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem [in AD 70], and thus understand by the *nagid* [prince], Titus, cannot apply the suffix to *nagid* [prince] [They are mistaken]...Thus there remains nothing else than to apply the suffix to the *Nagid*, the prince. *Ketz* [end] can accordingly **only denote the destruction of the prince...** **The prince will find his end in his warlike expedition...** In 7:21, 26 the enemy of God holds superiority until he is destroyed by the judgment of God... ‘The people of a prince who will come and find his destruction in the flood’” (*Commentary on Daniel*, p. 363).

In other words, translations which avoid the reference to the wicked prince (“his end”) do so because they think that the prophecy ought to refer to the Roman invasion of AD 70. Titus did not come to “his end” in that event.

Keil also maintains that the natural subject of “he will confirm” (9:27) is the same wicked prince, since the prince who was to come is named last and also the subject of the suffix (*kitzo*, his end), the last clause of v. 26 having only the significance of an explanatory subordinate clause.”

Kranichfeld: “The reference to ‘he shall confirm’ to the **ungodly leader** of an army is therefore according to the context and the parallel passages of the book which have been mentioned, as well as in harmony with the natural grammatical arrangement of the passage, and it gives also a congruous sense, although by the *Nagid* **Titus cannot naturally be understood...** The first historical fulfilling of Daniel 11 in the Maccabean times does not exclude a further and fuller accomplishment in the future, and the rage of Antiochus Epiphanes against the Jewish temple and the worship of God can only be a type of the assault of **Antichrist against the sanctuary** and the church of God in the time of the end...Still less from the words ‘whoever reads, let him understand’ (Matt. 24:15) can it be proved that Christ had only Daniel 9:27 and not also 11:31 and 12:11 before his view...On these grounds we must affirm that the reference of the words under consideration to the desecration of the temple before the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 by the Romans is untenable.”

Now this is no small matter. If the translation “HIS end” is correct, Daniel 9:26 cannot possibly have been fulfilled in AD 70 (the traditional evangelical view), because Titus did *not come to his end* in that episode.

I think that the translation “HIS” (not “its”) end is right for these reasons:

1) It is supported by commentaries that deal with the detail of the language minutely (Keil is typical of these).

2) The nearest singular masculine antecedent for the reference his/its end is the *prince* or his people, NOT THE CITY OR SANCTUARY.

3) If the city and sanctuary were meant (and these words are further away), the text should read “their end.” To separate city from sanctuary is very unnatural.

4) The Hebrew HIS END has a *masculine singular* suffix and cannot agree with the city which is feminine, OR WITH THE PLURAL CITY AND SANCTUARY. Keil says rightly that any reference except to the prince is very unnatural grammatically.

5) Most significant of all, the Hebrew word for “end” (*ketz*) never in 70 occurrences refers to *the destruction of a thing*. It refers to the **end** of a period of time and often to the end of the life, i.e. lifetime, of a PERSON. Even in Daniel alone, 11:45 speaks of HIS END, meaning the end of the final ruler (an obvious parallel with our verse in 9:26). Daniel is told to go to the END (i.e., of his life) in Daniel 12:13. In addition the end of human life is one of the main meanings of *ketz* (Jer. 51:13: “your end” = end of your days; Lam. 4:18: “Our end” drew near = our days were finished; Job 6:11: “my end” = end of my life; Ps. 39:4: “my end” = extent of my days; also Gen. 6:13: “the end of all flesh”).

6) *Brown, Driver and Briggs Lexicon of the Hebrew Bible* renders *kitzo* as “his end” (p. 893).

7) Driver in his commentary (*Cambridge Bible for Schools*) renders “his end.”

8) The Jewish Publication Society translation has “his end.”

9) The RV of 1881 altered the mistranslation “end thereof” of the KJV to “**his end**,” putting the latter in the text.

10) From Hungary this comment: “I spoke to a friend who teaches at the Lutheran Theological Academy. According to him **Kitzo means ‘his end.’** This is the meaning generally accepted by the Hungarian Bible Society. According to a recent translation (1996) we read ‘But the reigning prince will have his end when the flood comes’” (Ferenc Jeszenszky, 10.28.00).

11) We have an exact parallel in Daniel 11:45 where the final wicked person comes to “his end.” (*Ketz* occurs 15 times in Daniel.) In Daniel 8:25 the wicked one “is broken supernaturally without human hand.”

12) *Irwin’s Bible Commentary*, M.A, D.D, 1928: “Daniel 9:26: ‘Hebrew, his end.’”

I believe therefore that Keil and Moses Stuart are right when they say that the translation “its end,” i.e. the city’s end, is incorrect. The right translation, based on the immediate context (the antecedent is the prince) and the consistent meaning of *ketz* which never refers to the ruin

or destruction of a thing, but the end of a period of *time* and especially the end of human life, is “he will come to **his end** [death].” Daniel 9:26 thus refers to a future antichrist.

I maintain, therefore, with many commentators, that Daniel 9:26 cannot be a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 since Titus, the leader of the attack, did not come to *his end* in that event. But the evil ruler will come to *his end* (Dan. 11:45) in the holy land just before the resurrection (Dan. 12:2).

Therefore “the Abomination of Desolation standing where **he** (*estekota*) ought not to” (Mark 13:14) refers to the **future Antichrist** and is expanded by Paul when he describes the Man of Sin in 2 Thessalonians 2. This is the future King of the North of Daniel 11:21ff and also the final Beast of Revelation. John confirms this in 1 John 2:18 when he says that “you have heard that antichrist is coming.” That was not wrong! He adds that the spirit of antichrist was already on the scene in the time of John. Since then it has grown steadily and it will culminate in the final personal Abomination of Mark 13:14 (cp. Rev. 13:14: “the beast *who...*”; the assistant to the Beast is the false prophet).

For further confirmation I wrote to a distinguished Hebraist, under whose teaching I sat at the University of Jerusalem in 1970. Dr. Muraoka said: “Since the words ‘city and sanctuary’ are of mixed genders [one feminine and the other masculine] it would be difficult to know what the impersonal referent of the pronoun is. I think that the interpretation you propose [his end] is the most obvious.”

I note also the comment in *Lange’s Commentary on Daniel*: “The suffix in ‘his end’ doubtless refers to the prince...The subject of ‘he shall confirm a covenant’ (9:27) is beyond all question ‘the [evil] prince,’ which governs the preceding sentence as a logical subject, and is finally included in ‘his end,’ and is the prominent subject of consideration from verse 26b.”

As for Daniel 9:26b:

A Norwegian translation (1978) renders: “The city and the sanctuary shall be destroyed by the army of a coming prince. **He shall end his days in a flood.** The destruction that is determined shall last until the end of the war.”

The Danish 1998 translation (the Danish Bible Company) renders nearly the same: “and the city and the sanctuary is being destroyed by a prince who will be coming with his army. **He will meet his end** in a storming flood. It is determined that destruction shall continue until the war is over.”

The revised Swedish translation of 1917 (The Swedish Bible Company) has a slightly different rendering: “And the city and the sanctuary shall be

destroyed by the people of a coming [in the sense: coming with his armies] prince, but **this [the prince] shall have his end in the storming flood.** And until the end strife shall prevail (i.e. endure, last).”

The New Swedish translation of 1999 (The Swedish Bible Company) renders the verse: “Both the city and the sanctuary will be destroyed **as will the prince** to come. The end will come by a storming flood, and the determined destruction will last even until the end of the war.”♦

My Pentecostal Experience

by Kris, Colorado

In February 2010, I visited some of my extended family in Mississippi for the first time. During this time, I was introduced to an “Apostolic Pentecostal” church.

The leaders of this church told me that **I needed to speak in tongues in order to be saved.** The scriptures they utilized to persuade me of their claims were mainly Acts 2, 8, 10 and 19. Since I had not yet spoken in tongues, I decided to stay at that church until I had actually done so.

Each day, these men would take me into a room where I was to “seek” this experience. They asserted that one must “seek” (Matt. 7:7) and “tarry” (Luke 24:29, KJV) in order to receive this experience. In this room, they instructed me to pray on my knees — with my upper body supported by a chair. On this chair they would place a newspaper. The purpose of the newspaper was to catch any saliva that fell from my mouth as I prayed. They claimed that the saliva was actually God operating and thus closing or wiping our mouths was discouraged and deemed prideful. This technique was used for all those who were “seeking.”

These prayer sessions were usually conducted twice a day — once in the morning and once at night — and lasted about 2 hours each. The church leaders were actually paid to administer these events. During the night sessions, I was never alone in “seeking.” There were many others who were longing for the same experience. On days when there were church services/prayers, my fellow “seekers” and I were discouraged from participating. The leaders of the church recommended that we remain separated from church services so that we could focus on “seeking” in the prayer rooms.

I must add that we were not simply seeking to speak in tongues [languages]. In fact, according to this doctrine, the experience of speaking in tongues (*glossolalia*) was the evidence that one had actually received the Holy Spirit. Thus, we all thought that we were doomed to an eternal fire — a place that I came to find does not actually exist — if we did not speak in tongues.

The actual prayers were also directed by these church leaders. They instructed us to continuously repeat phrases such as “Thank you Jesus” and “I love you Jesus” until our tongues were “taken over” by the “Holy Ghost.” When they thought someone was close to speaking in tongues, they would often say, “let Him speak” — suggesting that God was actually speaking through us when we spoke in tongues. At times, these leaders were extremely cruel to us. If we did not speak in tongues, they talked down to us and even claimed that we were not trying hard enough. Interestingly, some of the church members became offended that I had not spoken in tongues after so many days of “seeking.”

These leaders also informed seekers that they would stutter before actually speaking in tongues — appealing to the word “stammering” in the KJV of Isaiah 28:11. However, this is a poor translation. After a grueling 30 days of participating in this madness, I “spoke in tongues” and then departed from Mississippi to my new home in Montana. Unfortunately, other sad souls who were “seeking” this experience before I arrived at this church were continuing their efforts even after I left.

Throughout my time in Montana, I attended another Apostolic Pentecostal church. During this period, I began to notice some inconsistencies in their doctrine. However, whenever I presented my issues to church leaders, they were never thoroughly addressed.

After spending almost a year in Montana, I moved to Germany and joined a church of the same doctrine. There I continued to see errors in their main teaching. On one occasion, I confronted the pastor about how a certain preacher was making people believe that they had actually received the “Holy Ghost” after he laid hands on them. This preacher was also claiming that “tongues” were the initial evidence of receiving the “Holy Ghost.” Despite whatever gibberish these people would utter, it would be taken for an authentic language. However, one cannot claim to have spoken in tongues without having someone verify that what they are speaking is an authentic language. Thus, whenever someone “speaks in tongues,” they are not actually doing so if the language cannot ever be authenticated.

I presented these facts and more to my pastor. I eventually drafted 12 pages of questions regarding the doctrine which claims that “speaking in tongues” is the non-negotiable, initial evidence of receiving “the Holy Ghost.” I then presented these questions to the pastor. Unfortunately, he went on vacation without answering any of my questions. In fact, he gave them to one of the other church leaders. After reviewing my questions, this man preached a sermon that attempted to address my inquiries. During the sermon, he asked me to stand up and read a particular Scripture. This request made me extremely angry. The whole situation was being handled

through a public sermon. Moreover, his efforts to explain away these doctrinal errors were ambiguous. After his sermon, I left the church and never returned.

1 Corinthians 12:30 clearly explains that all do not speak in tongues [languages]. The Apostolic Pentecostal doctrine (and many other groups) assert that this particular Scripture is referring to the “gift” of tongues, and not the “universal” experience of speaking in tongues for all those who receive “the Holy Ghost.” There are countless problems with this view. Ultimately, one cannot prove they are actually speaking in **an authentic language** unless someone can interpret it. Still, interpretations can also be fabricated and must be carefully discerned and evaluated. Otherwise a giant exercise in self-deception may occur.

I seek no sympathy for my experiences. These events have been instrumental in my Christian growth. I hope that others will learn from my story and in turn avoid any unnecessary delays in their own development. I believe that a person will find the truth if their heart is sincere. Many people hold on to false doctrine for years and even decades, refusing to question any of it. One must never assume that a church leader is correct in any of their instructions simply because of their seniority. An elder in the church can be 100 years old and still be completely wrong in his biblical understanding. Ultimately, we must study the Bible and pray that God gives us the proper understanding. We all need the Truth at all costs (2 Thess. 2:10).

I was 24 years old after all of this was over. Throughout my life, I have left the Baptist, Non-Denominational, and Pentecostal church. People may criticize you, and even call you a reprobate. Nevertheless, one must remember the verse which reads, “And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds” (Rev. 20:12).

We are all solely responsible for the decisions we make on this earth. Therefore, we should be steadfast in our quest for truth. After all, it was Jesus who said, “I came to ‘set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man’s enemies will be the members of his household’” (Matt. 10:35-36). Though our beliefs may be unpopular, pleasing God should always be our chief priority. ♦

The phrase “speaking in tongues” ought to be replaced, in the interests of avoiding a kind of self-deception, by the phrase “speaking in languages.”

“They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak **in other languages** as the Spirit enabled them to speak” (Acts 2:4 CEB).

“Men of Crete and Arabia, to all of us they are talking in **our different languages**, of the great works of God” (Acts 2:10 BBE).

“They heard them **speaking in languages they had not known before**. They also heard them praising God” (Acts 10:46 NIRV).

“When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking **in other languages and prophesying**” (Acts 19:6 CEB).

It might be most beneficial if we stop talking about “speaking in tongues,” and replace the phrase with “speaking in languages.” The point is that the Greek New Testament tells us about “speaking in languages,” since the apostles in Acts and some (not everyone) gifted in languages in Corinth spoke real, verifiable, recognizable languages, supernaturally spoken. This phenomenon was miraculous. The speakers in languages were able to speak real foreign languages which they had not learned. This is said to be a “sign to unbelievers” (1 Cor. 14:22). This was a demonstrable, verifiable, genuine miracle. As those of us who had to *learn* foreign languages (in my case German and French and reading biblical Hebrew and Greek) know, it is very hard work to learn a language other than one’s mother tongue! But in the Bible the languages (in Acts 1 and 1 Cor. 12-14) were spoken under direct inspiration of the holy spirit, divine energy and power.

What goes under the description of “speaking in tongues” today is to be tested by the biblical standard. If one claims to have the biblical gift of languages, then it is essential to prove this for oneself (lest one fall into self-deception), that is, prove that one is speaking a real, foreign language. One might have to record the languages and then seek good advice about whether it is in fact real language, rather than various random syllables. The danger of not doing this is that one could be making a false claim to oneself and to others. Paul himself directed the one who claims the gift of languages to “pray in order to interpret” (1 Cor. 14:13). This is the apostolic command. Paul never imagined that the “language” gift never emerge from the closet, unverified. ♦

Comments

“I’d like to thank you for continuously sending me your newsletter, *Focus on the Kingdom*. It serves me well in my desire to find truths about the Biblical unitarian view of God. I’ve been looking for a Biblical unitarian like faith churches to attend in this area. But I don’t have any knowledge to find a church, perhaps you can help me. I am still actively sharing my faith on unitarian view, and I continue to reach out to some of my Trinitarian friends.” — *Philippines*

“I’m a youth pastor, a husband and father of two girls. I just want to say thank you for all the time and effort you put in to get us the truth. It is an amazing thing to go back and see the **only true God** in all the Bible like a pop-up book. My family, my pastors and youth are all having an amazing time knowing God and His Son now. The puzzle piece finally fits. We have been studying and learning this truth from you and others for more than a year. In 2001 the Lord gave us a word, ‘when you look into my glory you’ll be instantly changed.’ And we have. Now it’s just a learning curve of how to approach and talk to others about it without sounding like a know it all. Again, thank you soooo much for your time and seeking for truth.” — *Louisiana*

“Thanks a lot for the work you are doing to educate me and the world about the Kingdom of God. I am really learning a great deal of new truths I have never known through this magazine. I would love to be in fellowship in such a church but unfortunately there is no branch here. All the same I thank God for you.” — *Cameroon*

The 23rd annual “Theological Conference” is now over. It was remarkable in every way. Congratulations to all who attended (some traveling from abroad) for their generous and gentle Berean attitude to the material presented which is not “theological” in some abstruse sense, but highly relevant and practical. We attempt to get at the truth of Scripture, believing that it is wise to search for and find health-giving truth (1 Tim. 6:3). Believing what is false in any area of the Bible is dangerous, like introducing cyanide to one’s coffee! Believing what is true and having a passion for truth is the way to salvation, said Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:10. Error or muddle diminishes the entrance of the spirit of God in our lives and minds.

Any who would like to find fellowship with others of a unitarian, Kingdom belief, please do visit Robin Todd’s website scatteredbrethren.org and contact him at robinsings4u@comcast.net