

Focus on the Kingdom

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Anthony Buzzard, editor

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Gospel of the Kingdom Matters

I spend several hours daily providing answers to a variety of Bible questions. A primary question concerns the Gospel. Why is it so hard for churchgoers to grasp the simple fact that Jesus was the first preacher of the saving Gospel, the Gospel about the Kingdom of God? Here is a typical example from my email reply to a question about the Gospel:

Thanks, but you are missing the point: It is JESUS who makes belief in the Kingdom the *sine qua non*, that is, the non-negotiable factor for repentance and faith, along of course with belief in his death and resurrection (Mark 4:11-12; Luke 8:12; Matt. 13:19).

You are assuming that the death and resurrection is the *whole* Gospel, but Jesus preached the Gospel long before even mentioning his death and resurrection (see Matt. 16:21).

You are misspelling even *Adonai*! You do not accept the careful distinction between *adoni* (195 times), a human lord and not Deity, and *Adonai* (449 times), always Deity.

The *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* says, “The form *adoni* (‘my lord’), a royal title (1 Sam. 29:8), is to be carefully distinguished from the divine title *Adonai* (‘Lord’) used of Yahweh” (p. 157).

You say that the Kingdom is incidental to Jesus! Hardly. “I must preach the Gospel about the Kingdom of God; that is why God commissioned me” (Luke 4:43).

Yes, the issue is about Jesus being the Messiah and the Messiah cannot be GOD, contradicting John 17:3 and 1300 references to GOD as the Father in the NT. The Father is “the only one who is true God” and so no one else can be (John 17:3).

Yes, indeed, without rebirth and belief in the Kingdom Gospel, one is failing.

But why are you still separating the Kingdom Gospel from Jesus and forgetting that we are saved by his knowledge too? (Isa. 53:11; 1 John 5:20). You are abstracting the Kingdom from the Gospel and making nothing of it!

We all agree that the death and resurrection are essential elements of the Gospel.

The point is that Jesus also PREACHED the Gospel, long before he spoke of his death (first in Matt. 16:21).

You should define the Kingdom by discussing the word “Kingdom” in Mark, but you don’t. Who said that

evangelicals have been right all these years? What if the faith fell into darkness from the 2nd century?

POINT: You say I am wrong about the Kingdom in Mark but you make no attempt to define the Kingdom from the verses which have “Kingdom” in Mark!

I don’t think you have understood the future Kingdom which is an essential part of the Gospel. Tell me about the Kingdom which Joseph of Arimathea was waiting for (Mark 15:43), in which the risen Abraham will appear (Matt. 8:11), which cannot begin until the 7th trumpet sounds (Rev. 11:15-18). Tell me about the Kingdom which will be about to come in Luke 21:31 and the Kingdom in which the Apostles will sit on 12 thrones (Matt. 19:28), and in which Jesus will have dinner with them (Luke 22:16).

Where in Mark does Jesus speak of a Kingdom other than the future Kingdom? Tell me of a Kingdom verse in Mark which makes the Kingdom the same as the church, etc. There are none. I am trying to ask you to obey Jesus by believing the Kingdom of God as he said in Mark 1:14-15.♦

Watch Out!

Note the subtle shift away from the essential teaching of Jesus in the following quotation!

“The Gospel, the ‘good news,’ consisted in the proclamation of certain alleged historical facts about a particular Palestinian Jew. It is true too that the history thus proclaimed was the history of one who had himself been a teacher. [But it was] above all, by his sacrificial death and resurrection and ascension — it was primarily for these facts, and *not for his teaching, that credence was primarily demanded.*”

(Dr. George Selwyn, *Short History of Christian Thought*, 1949, pp. 16, 17)

Jesus himself made belief in his *teaching*, as well as his death and resurrection, the absolute condition of salvation. See his strong warning in Matthew 7:21ff; John 12:44ff; Heb. 5:9; John 3:36; 1 Tim. 6:3; 2 John 7-9. Only those who base themselves on his words/teachings succeed.

Motivation, Obedience, and Water

by Ken LaPrade, Texas

"But I certainly admit this as a fact that in accordance with the Way — that they call heresy — I continue to worship the God of my forefathers, and I still believe in everything taught in the law and written in the prophets, and I have the same hope in God that they cherish for themselves, that there is to be a resurrection of the upright and the wicked. So I am always striving to have a conscience that is clear before God and men" (Acts 24:14-16, Williams).

The Apostle Paul's example certainly serves as a model for genuine motivation. If one is called a heretic, a sect member, a "cult" leader, or whatever; so be it. This is certainly the vocabulary that the world dishes out toward biblical Messianic monotheists. When mainstream religion tends to bandy about such epithets in order to bully, marginalize, and dismiss smaller groups, true believers should not be intimidated. The important thing is to stay focused, believing and obeying all that is written in Scripture while striving (in light of the future resurrection truth) to have a conscience that is clear before God and men.

It is important not to regard the subject of baptism as a name-calling issue. I recently heard a presentation by Dale Tuggy at the Theological Conference in which he appealed to the motivation of love among Christians to refrain from dropping "H bombs" on one another, "H" standing for heresy. I pray that we heed such reminders. If anything, name-calling simply serves to stiffen the resolve of disagreeing parties instead of producing unity. This is **not** a matter of being in denial about erroneous doctrines from "church A," "church B," or our own past religious affiliations; it **is** a matter of obeying God by refusing to be slanderers! (1 Pet. 2:1; Eph. 4:29-32).

A recent phone call (from a man I've never yet met) was one recent reminder of this. Many of us learned many years ago that having one's conscience dedicated to God might entail rubbing certain people the wrong way, even people we love. If we are kindhearted, this is not a situation we perversely seek; it's an inevitable consequence of godly priorities (Luke 14:25-35). According to Mark 3:20-21, 31-35, the lord Jesus himself had to deal with what must have felt stressful — needing to boldly stand for God despite the incorrect attitude of his own family members. We should not be swayed by the peer pressure of either majority or minority opinions; but, at the same time, we should stay receptive or meek to learn from **any** individual believer! None of us have yet acquired some sort of infallible status. As we await knowing "fully" and seeing "face to face," "we know in part...For now we see through a mirror dimly" (1 Cor.

13:9, 12). In light of such mutually shared limitations, we can gently, respectfully help each other grow past Scriptural misunderstandings without name-calling. It's a big deal!

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" (Matt. 5:9).

In case it could be helpful, I will comment briefly on my own path of learning. Once upon a time, I embraced a certain doctrine based on a construct derived from a handful of verses. These verses were extracted from their contexts and given a spin to encourage the idea of a pre-tribulation rapture. About 19 years ago, while studying the Christian hope, I started to have serious doubts about this *status quo* idea that I had held onto for 24 previous years. I did not speak of my doubts for at least a year before starting to share a corrected Biblical understanding of future events. By the time I had started to discard my old theology, by God's mercy, I began to have some very helpful contact with others whose learning was similar to mine.

For some reason, my learning about baptism was much more gradual. In northern Mexico in 1997 (18 years ago) a friend of mine taught from 1 Corinthians chapter 1 the interpretation that Paul baptized only a few at Corinth with holy spirit, **not** water. My sincerely mistaken friend was typically defending the *status quo* of our group. I realized then, with somewhat of a shock, that his explanation (just like our pre-tribulation rapture explanations) **did not make sense**. By the way, I'm not being critical of my old friend (no "cult" vocabulary or "H bombs" from me!), but the memory of that doubt ended up being a seed for future growth.

After a few years, when some of us discussed baptism ideas, I remember entertaining the idea that the book of Acts was sort of a historical transition, as people were gradually weaned from water to spirit baptism. Nevertheless, the more I read the **whole** NT, the more I began to suspect that this vague idea might really be a way of explaining away a simpler solution. Such "weaning" never took place in Acts!

I became aware of fellow monotheistic Christians who were highly in favor of water baptism about 13 or 14 years ago. Interestingly, I was never pressured or influenced by their perspective. I certainly did not think badly of anyone for practicing water baptism, but I was once put off when I saw some name-calling about this issue. About three years ago I did have the enjoyment of a brief conversation with a young man who gently shared about the blessings of water baptism, without being pushy or using slanderous speech. It is interesting for me to reflect that I never read a real, Biblical pro-water baptism study until last week, a few days **after** I had written and shared "Rethinking Baptism." Thus my changed paradigm was not at all the result of being

badgered or even “talked into” a new point of view. Once again, as with many previous personal changes, it was all by God’s mercy; I simply had to be truly convinced through careful, prayerful study of the Scriptures themselves. Everyone must be allowed that opportunity, however much time it might take.

Though recently convinced of the importance of obeying God regarding water baptism, an external action to accompany “an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 3:21b), I believe it is equally imperative to heed the lord’s reminders about “the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness” (Matt. 23:23). We should be able to obey in attitudes of heart without neglecting the outward requirements. By the same token, obeying God in external symbols is not sufficient in itself; we must bear godly fruit regarding that which proceeds from the mouth, that which truly reflects a changed heart (Matt. 15:18-20; James 3). We must be equally committed to practicing forgiveness from the heart (Matt. 6:14-15; 18:21-35). Such deep heart realities **leave no room** for destructive “H bombs,” finger-pointing, lack of forgiveness, etc. If our zealous enthusiasm for Biblical accuracy has been accompanied by stubborn grudges or bitter slanders, we can apologize honestly and get back on track (1 John 1:5-2:3; James 5:16).

In 1 Corinthians 1:10-17, the apostle Paul strongly rebuked the divisiveness with which men were prone to exalt one man over another. In that context, he mentioned the limited number of people that he had baptized. “For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel” (v. 17).

Since “preaching the gospel” would motivate hearers to respond or believe (and then, eventually, be filled with holy spirit), Paul’s references to limited baptisms were very obviously washings with water; otherwise the whole argument **does not make sense**. 1 Corinthians was written about 25 years after the original outpouring of holy spirit on Pentecost, so the use of water was certainly not diminished by that time! With regard to verse 17, “this statement in its context does not teach that water baptism is wrong or superfluous, but that the baptizer is not to be elevated because of the task he or she performs. Paul’s purpose as received from Christ is to preach the gospel. When people respond, he may baptize them or have someone else do it; it makes no difference” (Sean Finnegan, “Water Baptism Considered,” p. 7).

“In particular, Paul digs down underneath any suggestion that special significance was to be attached to the person who baptized a new Christian. He assumes that they have all been baptized, and he will from time to time return to this to make particular points. Paul took **baptism** extremely seriously. It was the formal, outward sign, before God, one’s family, the wider community, and

the whole church, that you were leaving your old identity behind and entering the new life of God’s people in the Messiah. Baptism for the Christian was like crossing the Red Sea for Israel, at the time of the **Exodus**: it meant coming out of slavery into freedom—and responsibility (1 Cor. 10:1-13). But the only name to be baptized into was the name of the Messiah. The person who did the baptizing was quite irrelevant.”¹

“Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit’” (Acts 2:38).

Since Peter’s declaration here on the day of Pentecost, (1) water baptism (washing) in the Messiah for the forgiveness of sins and (2) receiving the gift of holy spirit are sometimes paired as corresponding realities. Nevertheless, they are consistently distinguished in Acts and the whole NT in an unambiguous way. Water baptism in the Messiah was **not** the same thing as John’s previous water baptism in preparation for the Messiah to be revealed. To see how all of this is clearly communicated with precise Biblical vocabulary, I highly recommend Sean Finnegan’s paper “Water Baptism Considered.”◊

Did Paul Think Joseph Was Jesus’ Biological Father?

“Whenever Paul speaks of the birth of Jesus Christ, he uses the verb *ginomai*, which has the broad meaning of ‘come to be.’ This is particularly significant in Gal. 4:4, 23ff. Jesus Christ ‘comes to be’ by a woman, whereas Isaac and Ishmael, born of two women, are begotten and born, since the verb *gennao*, used here, carries overtones of the father’s act. Paul uses the same general word in Rom. 1:3 (‘came of the seed of David according to the flesh’) and Phil. 2:7 (‘coming to be in the likeness of men’). On each occasion, Paul avoids the normal word for born, which is understandable if, as the traveling companion of Luke, he knew that Jesus was born miraculously. It may well be that he had the virgin birth in mind when he drew the balance and contrast between Adam and Christ in 1 Cor. 15:45-48...There is thus little justification for speaking of the silence of the NT outside Matthew and Luke. Such reticence as there was in public preaching may well have been out of respect for Mary...malicious tongues could easily have turned the virgin birth into scandal. Consider also how rarely any orthodox preacher today mentions the virgin birth in his normal run of sermons during the year, even though he often refers to the incarnation.”

(J. Stafford Wright, “Son,” *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, p. 661)

¹N.T. Wright, *Paul for Everyone: 1 Corinthians*, Westminster John Knox Press, 2003, p. 8-9.

Hard Facts

by Keith Relf, New Zealand

"There is some warrant for asserting that the propensity to believe evident nonsense increases rather than decreases with higher education."²

"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of his calling, what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints" (Eph. 1:17-18).

We have come to the firm personal conclusion that no amount of bluster or scholarly waffle about "wasting God's time" can hide the fact from a reasonable mind that some things believed by churchgoers are in fact *nonsense*. The sordid history of orthodoxy does not do honor to the Name of the One they claim to know and teach. Therefore, one has only to apply Jesus' test, that one does not draw sweet water from a polluted well or grapes from a thorn bush. Unfortunately, few are willing to forgo the acceptance of their peers and make a stand for what they suspect to be true in their own minds, but rather they imagine ignorance or embrace "mystery" to salve a troubled conscience and agree with the crowd. Truth then fails!

It is easier for Christians to go along with popular opinion, as was ably explained by the German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860): "There is no opinion, however absurd, which men will not readily embrace as soon as they can be brought to the conviction that it is generally adopted."

An example of the sort of dogma that is proclaimed by orthodoxy to keep the unlearned "in submission" goes like this: "The Son of God died; it is absolutely to be believed because it is absurd. And he was buried and rose again; the fact is certain because it is impossible."³ That sort of argument must be either blindly believed ("by faith") or thrown out as nonsense, which unfortunately, most of the world do. The Bible never speaks like this, but yes, the Son of God (not God the Son) did die and his Father raised him from the dead and exalted him. In plain language see Acts 2:14-36.

Even Albert Einstein gave homage to Isaac Newton, the great physicist and theologian who perceived God's hand in Creation and refused to confess the Trinity; therefore many of Newton's theological works are kept unavailable to the public. Newton wrote that "the human race is prone to mysteries, and holds nothing so holy and perfect as that which cannot be understood," but advised

²Peter Berger, *A Far Glory: The Quest of Faith in an Age of Credulity*, Free Press, 1992, p. 163.

³E.G. Bewkes, *The Western Heritage of Faith and Reason*, Holt, Rinehart, 1971.

that "Truth is ever to be found in simplicity, and not in multiplicity and confusion of things." How true!

William Tyndale said that scholars who argued about the meanings behind the apparent meaning of words were "idle disputers and brawlers about vain words, ever gnawing on the bitter bark without and never attaining the sweet pith within." To Tyndale, the Bible is to be read as a whole, and the words accepted for what they are, "for it tells a tale that any man or woman can understand, without being ordained, or studying theology." Not long before the Church burnt Tyndale for his faith he wrote, "Cleave fast to the rock of the help of God and commit the end of all things to Him" and "Be not overcome by men's persuasions."⁴

Isaac Watts, the great logician and hymn writer ("When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," "Joy to the World," "O God, Our Help in Ages Past" and over 500 more), pointed out in his classic textbook on logic, "The power of reasoning was given us by our Maker, for this very end, to pursue truth; and we abuse one of His richest gifts if we basely yield up to be led astray by any of the meaner powers of nature or the perishing interests of this life. Reason itself, if honestly obeyed, will lead us to receive the divine revelation of the Gospel, where it is duly proposed, and this will show us the path to life everlasting."⁵

It is evident that there is a close connection between Isaac Watts' study of logic and his rejection of the Trinity. After devoting 20 years to intense scriptural study on the nature of God, Watts wrote: "But how can such weak creatures ever take in so strange, so difficult and so abstruse a doctrine as this [the Trinity], in the explication and defence whereof multitudes of men, even men of learning and piety, have lost themselves in infinite subtleties of dispute and endless mazes of darkness? And can this strange and perplexing notion of three real persons going to make up one true God be so necessary and so important a part of that Christian doctrine, which, in the Old Testament and the New, is represented as so plain and so easy, even to the meanest understandings?"⁶

In the light of the foregoing, my question is: On what grounds does an organization claiming to be Bible-based and "Christ-centered" uphold doctrine never mentioned by Jesus or the Apostles, unless it follows the Roman creed of inerrancy and superiority of the Church's

⁴From William Tyndale: *If God Spare My Life* by Brian Moynahan.

⁵*Logic*, first published in 1724, reprinted by Soli Deo Gloria Publications, Morgan, PA, 1996, p. 325.

⁶Quoted in William G. Eliot, *Discourses on the Doctrines of Christianity*, American Unitarian Assn., 1877, pp. 97, 100.

teaching and tradition over the Bible? To be honest before God you must answer that question and act.

Consider these passages. Read them as they are; don't try and "interpret" them according to some preconceived doctrine:

John 14:28: "I go to the Father, for my Father is greater than I."

John 20:17: "I ascend to my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."

Ephesians 4:6: "One God and Father of all, who is above all."

Jesus prays: "Father, the time has come. **Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority** over all people that he might give eternal life to all those **you have given him**. Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom **you have sent**. [‘Sent’ does not suggest “from heaven”, John the Baptist and the prophets where all “sent.” It means “commissioned.”] I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work **you gave me to do**” (John 17:2-4, NIV).

The words in bold are strange statements between co-equal, co-eternal beings!

"Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and declared to them...‘Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in your midst...being delivered by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put him to death, but God raised him up, putting an end to the agony of death...This Jesus God raised up, to which we are all witnesses. Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured forth this which you both see and hear...Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made that same Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:14-36).

Later Stephen testified: "But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; and he said, ‘Behold, I see the heavens opened up, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God...They went on stoning Stephen as he called on the Lord and said, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!’ Then falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, ‘Lord, do not hold this sin against them!’ Having said this, he fell asleep" (Acts 7:55-60).

And there are many more such clear statements in Scripture that exclude any idea of Jesus being God or of God being three Persons:

2 Corinthians 11:31: "The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, He who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying."

Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ."

1 Peter 1:3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

Deuteronomy 6:4: "Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord."♦

The Virgin Birth

Be careful not to disbelieve the easy story: "Betrothal among the Jews must not be confused with present-day engagement. It was far more serious and binding. The bridegroom and bride pledged their troth to each other in the presence of witnesses. In a restricted sense this was essentially the marriage. So also here, as is clear from the fact that from that moment on Joseph is called Mary's husband (Matt. 1:19); Mary is called Joseph's wife (Matt. 1:20). According to the Old Testament regulation unfaithfulness in a betrothed woman was punishable with death (Deut. 22:23, 24). Yet, though the two were now legally 'espoused,' it was considered proper that an interval of time elapse before husband and wife begin to live together in the same home. Now it was before Joseph and Mary had begun thus to live together, with all this implies both as to domestic and sexual relations, that Mary discovered her pregnancy. She was still a virgin, and not yet 'married' in the full sense of the term. She knew immediately that the cause of her condition was the powerful life-imparting operation of the Holy Spirit. She knew it because the angel Gabriel had told her that this would happen (Luke 1:26-35). **She knew that Joseph had not made her pregnant.**"

(W. Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew*, p 130)

The One God, the Father, One Man Messiah Translation New Testament with Commentary

The notes confirm belief in the unitary monotheistic creed of Jesus and his Gospel of the Kingdom. Jesus' allegiance to the One God of his Jewish heritage ought to provide for us, his claimed followers, our own definition of God. We've received 14 very encouraging reviews which can be read at Amazon.com

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The Logic of the 70 “Sevens” Prophecy of Daniel 9:24:27

In the Hebrew text of Daniel 9:26b we read that the evil person “comes to **his** end in the flood” of judgment and then of that same person: “**he** comes desolating on the wing of abominations” (v. 27). Thus the prince who comes desolating of course is not Jesus! And that evil prince who comes to **his** end, i.e. is destroyed (cp 11:45 and 8:25, supernaturally broken), makes a strong covenant with the many for the final period of 7 years. In the middle of that final 7 years he becomes very openly evil and for the last half of that 7 years he desolates. It is that last half of the 7 years which Jesus unpacks for us in Revelation 11:2-3; 12:6, 14; 13:5. JESUS thus places the 7 years and its last half close to the Second Coming just as he does also in Matthew 24:15 (the Abomination is the trigger for the time of Great Tribulation, Dan. 12:1).

The Central Importance of Daniel 9:24-27; 12:11, and the Second Half of the Final Seven Years

“Both Jews and Christians, basing their calculations on Dan. 12:11ff, expected the ‘end of the world’ [age] within four years of the fall of Jerusalem (Rev. 11:1ff) and it is not surprising that Matthew, a Christian Jew, should show particular interest in apocalyptic [the future coming of Jesus to inaugurate the Kingdom on earth] and that he should give the impression throughout the Gospel that the coming or Parousia of Jesus will not be long delayed” (*Clarendon Bible, Matthew*, 1938, p. 173).

Matthew was of course right, as was Jesus in Revelation 11:1-2, but the fall of Jerusalem in question and mentioned by the prophecies was a fall *yet future* to us, and not in AD 70, after which no Kingdom arrived.◊

E.P. Sanders on Homosexual Activity

“Paul was against homosexuality, both active and inactive, both male and female. This marks him as Jewish...We are not surprised that he condemns all homosexual activity, nor that he specifies both the active and the passive partners. Out of an excess of modesty some English translations do not precisely render 1 Corinthians 6:9. The RSV has ‘sexual perverts’ and the NEB ‘homosexual perversion.’ The Jerusalem Bible correctly has ‘catamites’ and ‘sodomites.’ Paul names both the effeminate partner, the *malakos*, ‘soft’ one, and the active one, the *arsenokoitios*. Some scholars propose that the words are uncertain as to meaning and thus that perhaps Paul did not really condemn homosexuality. The words, however, are quite clear. ‘Soft’ was a common term for the passive partner...We noted the word in the *Sibylline Oracle* 2:73, and both that passage and Paul’s

reflect the terminology of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13: *meta arsenos koiten*, ‘he who has coitus with a male.’ In another passage, Romans 1:26-7, Paul condemns both male and female homosexuality in blanket terms and without any distinctions” (E.P. Sanders, *Paul*, 2009, p. 172-176).◊

For our readers in Washington state who may not be aware, a congregation of the General Conference Church of God was formed a year and a half ago west of the Cascades. The Western Washington Church of God meets at the following locations once each month:

2nd Sunday: Tenino High School, 500 W. 2nd St., Tenino; 10:00 a.m.

3rd Sunday: Kent Senior Activity Center, 600 E. Smith St., Kent; 10:00 a.m.

4th Sunday: Vancouver YWCA, 3609 Main St., Vancouver; 10:00 a.m.

No Bible studies or worship services on the 1st and 5th Sundays at this time. For more information contact Pastor Robin Todd at robinsings4u@comcast.net, or call him in Olympia at (360) 701-9219. Robin also has information about others around the U.S. looking for contact with other believers. You can see a list of those contact cities/towns by going to www.scatteredbrethren.org and then clicking on the appropriate “region,” or by emailing him at the above address.

Comments

“I love the analogy that God would like nothing more than for us, his children, to come to him and ask for wisdom, understanding, and discernment just as we, as parents, would love nothing more than our children to ask us for the same. So true! Even my dad who is not a religious person will say to me when I have not heeded his advice, ‘See, you should have listened to your old dad.’ I do not want to hear that from God when it is too late!” — *YouTube comment*

“I have been waiting for about a year to get your *One God, the Father, One Man Messiah Translation*. While its content is all-important to me, I wanted to say how beautiful was the choice for the cover, so colorful and bright, and the quieting it imparts to one’s soul — like walking into the garden of Eden. Thank you for your superb efforts in this work to bring clarity out of confusion and share with us the simplicity of the Bible. If God had not loved His creation He wouldn’t have made the message of the coming Kingdom so clear. Truth lies in the pages of Scripture available to everyone who loves and desires to read and hear it directly, putting aside the

traditions of men, which have obscured the value of His word promised to those willing to seek and determine the truth. God supplies everything that is good for us, but He cannot provide a ‘loyal heart’ for which we are responsible, with accountability to Him. His provision for giving man ‘a free will’ ultimately means a choice we must make if we desire to be in His Kingdom. To grow in faith it is no less imperative to understand the truth of the words of the one man Messiah, Son of God, with whom God the Father is well pleased.

“Scripture demands that we study and actively search for truth directly! We won’t come to know truth by simply accepting only what our religious leaders say it is, and there is no replacement or substitute acceptable. The shortest and simplest to the point statement Yeshua probably ever made concerned his Father, our Father, in John 17:17: ‘Your word is truth.’ Is there anything easier to understand? If it comes down to what one is willing to stake his life on, how wise is one’s acceptance of what may *not* be the truth? How would anyone know either way unless one determines by comparison? According to the promise of the Messiah, believers have the indwelling Holy Spirit which will lead us into all truth. We have been given the advantages if we would use them. They are free from a loving God with all the other promises He has made. He won’t disappoint us.” — *Florida*

“I was doubly overcome with joy and amazement to find your tremendous translation of the N.T., *The One God, the Father, One Man Messiah Translation*. And especially your 40 page introduction! How gloriously you have laid out the one Faith in the One God, our Heavenly Father and His Unique Son, the Messiah, the perfect Man, created in the womb of Mary, our Saviour, Jesus, who his Father has appointed Lord over all. I loved your final summary: ‘Jesus is the *adoni*, “my lord” of Psalm 110:1 and his relation to the Father is repeated continually in the NT, summarized by Paul’s un-complex creed in 1 Timothy 2:4-5: God “wants everyone to come to the knowledge of the truth, namely that there is one God, and one mediator between God and man, Messiah Jesus, himself **man**.” This is the task of a Church desiring to be faithful to Jesus and Scripture.’ I have also enjoyed reading the “Prison Epistles,” Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians, and how you have emphasized the Father and the Messiah and the Kingdom in them, still that one Hope of the Messianic Kingdom, even for the Gentiles and particularly for us today! Contrary to the ‘dispensational teaching’ which would have us that Paul has had revealed a ‘mystery’ for gentile believers being blessed ‘far above all in heavenly places’! Also, I loved the cover. I guess that it is a photo of Barbara’s and your beautiful garden taken in the spring. And especially of the azalea.” — *New Zealand*

“I used to be a trinitarian and a few years ago something changed. I started feeling uncomfortable about the trinity doctrine — that something was wrong. This happened the first time one day while driving and seeing the church signs everywhere referencing Jesus with the words ‘Jesus is God’ but nothing regarding God our Father. It was as if God our Father weren’t really important — and that did not feel right. I was thinking, Isn’t everything about God? Didn’t He love us so much that He sent His Son to die for our sins on the cross? Why does He, our father, get so neglected while He is the most high? After those initial thoughts and struggle I sat in a sermon one day and listened to someone preaching and saying, ‘Jesus is God, praise God.’ And right then I knew what was wrong, why I felt so uncomfortable, as something within me felt very uncomfortable right at that moment, knowing it’s wrong. Jesus is not God and I then never returned to that church. I started to look for answers as I had struggled in myself (being brought up as a trinitarian) as that went against everything we were taught from childhood. I started searching for answers about what is right and what is wrong. Once again with questions to myself like, Did I misunderstand what is written in the Bible? If so why did the concept of the trinity trouble me so much? I then stumbled across the unitarian vs. trinity debate and the more I listened the more I realized the truth according to the Bible. I discussed all this with my family and now we all (my wife, and both sons) believe the trinity is wrong. We also stumbled across the 21stOneGod channel on YouTube that gave us a lot to work with and insight. It helped us to understand certain issues so much better. The problem we have is it’s difficult not belonging in a church and we so wished that there was a unitarian (is that the right term?) church available for us to attend. Thanks for taking the time to read this and all the insight you gave us through your various talks on the internet as it truly changed our lives.” — *South Africa*

“I minister to three small congregations in Philippines. Several pastors are now convinced that the Trinity is not in the Scriptures. I travel by scooter bike (about 340 km) every weekend to teach at each congregation. I have been doing this for over 25 years.” — *Philippines*

To our international readers: If you are willing and able to receive *Focus on the Kingdom* by **email** each month (to save us postage), please send us an email to **anthonybuzzard@mindspring.com** or sign up at **www.restorationfellowship.org** with your name and email address.