

Focus on the Kingdom

Vol. 18 No. 4

Anthony Buzzard, editor

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25th Theological Conference

April 28-May 1, 2016

Calvin Center, Hampton, GA

Please join us for our annual gathering of passionate Kingdom and biblical unitarian believers. We will have a full schedule of speakers, as well as your “faith stories.” 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.

Conference rates per person—inc. 3 nights, 9 meals

	Single	Double (per person)
Hotel-style room (2 beds with private bath, sheets/towels)	\$415	\$260
Bunkbed room (6 per room with bath) <i>We can assign roommates</i>	\$185 per person +\$15 for sheets and towels or bring your own	

Please note that there are **only 24 hotel-style rooms available**, so please register early. First come, first served! There are also hotels 15 minutes away by car (see list at theologicalconference.org). If not staying at Calvin Center, the conference price including meals (except breakfasts) is **\$85 per person**.

Three ways to register:

1. Online at theologicalconference.org
2. Mail the form on the back page
3. Call Atlanta Bible College at 800-347-4261

Registration deadline: April 8, 2016

Airport Transportation

We will provide transportation between Atlanta airport and Calvin Center for \$25 round-trip or \$15 one-way, at the following times:

Airport to Calvin Center		
Thurs. April 28	2:00 pm	4:00 pm
Calvin Center to Airport		
Sun. May 1	1:00 pm	

Please arrange your arrival time on Thursday early enough to catch one of the two shuttle runs. On Sunday, May 1 we will provide **only 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 pm.

The conference begins with registration at 4 pm on Thursday and ends with lunch on Sunday. Driving directions to Calvin Center are at calvincenter.org. The address is 13550 Woolsey Rd., Hampton, GA 30228.

Keep Your Mind Clear

Echad

I must point out as a language teacher and ordinary speaker of English that it is dishonesty to say that *echad* (Hebrew for “one”) can mean more than one! That is false, very false. *Echad*, like “one” in English, can modify any noun in the universe. Any noun whatever — one nose, one zebra, one loaf of sliced bread. The word means one and **not more than one**. Of course it can modify a collective noun, like “one family.” But it is utterly false to say that “one” means more than one. It is a slippery argument! Very slippery. “One zebra” does not mean that one means black and white, and “one tripod” does not mean that one means three!

Alpha and Omega

Jesus as the “alpha and omega” in Revelation means that he is the ultimate *in the category under discussion*. Jesus is the **alpha and omega**, the first and the last, who *died* in Revelation 1:17-18 and 2:8. **God cannot die!** Jesus is “the author and finisher of our faith” (Heb. 12:2). Please note that Jesus said that the Father is the **only one who is true God** (John 17:3). Romans 3:29 says that the God of the Jews is the same as the God of the Gentiles, showing that the Trinity is foreign to the whole Bible. See John 17:3; Neh. 9:6; 2 Kings 19:15; Isa. 37:20. Show this to all your friends: Cars do not fly; God cannot die! The Son of God, Jesus, died (Rom. 5:10).

Then show them a quote from a standard theological dictionary: “God is not just any Deity, but a distinct **divine Person**. The LORD is His name” (*Theological Dictionary of the NT*, single volume, p. 489). It is an obvious contradiction of this easy evidence to say that God is three Persons. He is one Person.

Then show them the crime scene: Basil of Caesarea (330-379 AD), one of the architects of the detail of Trinitarianism, said, “We confess **one God not in number** but in nature.” Jesus said nothing of the sort!

One is a number! Is that so hard? Remember too that Augustine, desperate to support the Trinity, forged the text in John 17:3, claiming that it should read: “That they may know You [Father] and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent, as the only true God” (*Homilies on the Gospel of John*). Scripture was thus violated and the unitary monotheism of Jesus and of Israel was obscured. ✧

Don't Be Tricked by the Word "Worship"

To "worship" in the Bible does not mean what we hear in English — that the object of worship must be God. That is false. Here are two of many examples. Human beings can be worshiped too! This does not mean that they are God.

1 Chronicles 29:20: "And David said to all the people, 'Now give praise to the Lord your God.' And all the people gave praise to the Lord, the God of their fathers, with bent heads **worshipping the LORD and the king**" (BBE).

Revelation 3:9: "Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie — indeed I will make them come and worship before your [the saints'] feet, and to know that I have loved you" (NKJ).

The use of the word "worship" in no way proves that the recipient is God. ✧

Have Tongues Ceased?

by Mark Clarke, Washington

In previous articles we have looked at why tongues was a gift, one of several that manifested God's Holy Spirit, and not every Christian received all gifts; therefore not every believer spoke in tongues in the first-century church. We have also seen that the purpose of languages was to be a sign to unbelievers (1 Cor. 14:22), confirming the message being preached. In 1 Corinthians 14:13 Paul instructed those of the congregation who had the gift of languages to "pray in order to translate." Thus the gift of languages was never ever to remain permanently non-public. It was to go public too, so that all might know what was being said.

"Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away" (1 Cor. 13:8-10)

"The perfect" refers to the perfect state of affairs that will come to pass at the *Parousia* (Christ's second coming). It is then that we shall see him face to face. But the important thing to understand is that Paul says nothing here about tongues continuing or not continuing *until* the *Parousia*, although many think he does. If we read carefully, we see that he says in verse 8 that prophecy will be done away, tongues will cease, and knowledge will be done away.

Then the rest of the chapter continues the theme of the supremacy of love, and doesn't mention the gifts at all. It only speaks of the superiority of seeing face to face over seeing in a mirror, and knowing as we are known,

over knowing in part. So this whole passage, so often cited in the debate over tongues, neither proves nor disproves when tongues would cease. It is clear that Paul says that all temporary knowledge will be unnecessary when Jesus reappears visibly. But he does not say that all the present (for him) avenues of knowledge have to go on until the Second Coming. We know for example that the office of Apostle ceased after the death of the Apostles, and with that the cessation of the accrediting signs and wonders that mark out an Apostle (2 Cor. 12:12). An Apostle, at the level of the 12, must also have seen Jesus personally (1 Cor. 9:1).

Nevertheless there is abundant evidence, both Biblical and extra-Biblical, that the gifts did in fact eventually cease.

Other than the reference in Mark 16, the gift of tongues is only spoken of in Acts and 1 Corinthians. It is not mentioned anywhere else in the New Testament. Neither Paul, in his later epistles, nor James, Peter, John, and Jude make any mention at all of speaking in tongues. Surely if it were a major tool to be used for our benefit as so many Charismatics claim, there would be more written about it than just the rebuke of its misuse in 1 Corinthians. In addition, the writer of Hebrews speaks of the message of salvation, "which **at the first** began to be spoken by the Lord, and **was confirmed** to us by those who heard him; God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to his own will" (Heb. 2:3-4). Notice that God's bearing witness is here referred to as something that happened in the past for the purpose of confirming the message being preached (see also 2 Cor. 12:12).

But what about Mark 16:17-18? Didn't Jesus say that there would be signs following those who believe, including speaking with new tongues? This passage comes right after Jesus upbraided the apostles for their lack of faith. He then challenged them to go into the whole world and preach the gospel. "He who has believed and has been baptized will be saved; but he who has disbelieved will be condemned" (Mark 16:16). The singular "he who has believed" indicates that every single person who believes along biblical lines and is baptized will be saved (Acts 8:12; Heb. 5:9; Luke 8:12; John 3:36) But in contrast, verses 17 and 18 refer to "those" who believe. The plural indicates that it is talking about believers as a group.

"These signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover" (Mark 16:17-18).

This passage doesn't say that these signs would follow **everyone** who believes right up until the Second Coming, and that **all** believers are supposed to speak in tongues. Nowhere else in the New Testament is such a statement made, and in fact Paul states emphatically that **not** all speak in tongues in 1 Corinthians 12:30: "Do all speak in tongues?" The implied answer is "absolutely not!" It is equally and emphatically true that not everyone is an Apostle. It is quite amazing that some say that the gift, the least in the list, is available to all Christians. This is exactly what Paul says is not the case!

Besides, if one takes this text to mean that all believers are to do these things, why limit it to speaking in tongues? Why not also insist that all believers are to cast out demons, take up serpents, drink poison with no harm, or lay hands on the sick? Most of these signs are recorded in the book of Acts. (There is no record of anyone drinking poison, but the incident in Acts 28 of Paul being accidentally bitten by a snake and having no harm is similar to the prophecy that they would pick up snakes.) Yet they are recorded as happening to certain individuals on certain occasions, but obviously not to all believers. Remember, Jesus didn't say that all believers should do these things, much less seek out such signs. He said they would accompany or follow believers, they would happen as a result, and we see from the rest of Scripture that not every single believer did all of these things. In addition, the signs which confirmed the word they were preaching also became less frequent as time went on.

Even the miraculous healings, which were signs to confirm the Gospel, were not performed by all believers, and they also happened with less frequency. God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul (Acts 19:11), but at a later point he tells us that Epaphroditus was sick "to the point of death, but God had mercy on him" (Phil. 2:25-27). He advised Timothy to use a little wine for the sake of his stomach and his frequent ailments (1 Tim. 5:23). And he says, "Trophimus I left sick in Miletus" (2 Tim. 4:20). In none of these cases does he mention seeking for an instantaneous, miraculous healing. This is not to say that God no longer works healing or miracles in our lives, as He chooses, in response to our prayers. But the purpose of individual men publicly performing healing and miracles was a sign to confirm the Gospel message. In fact Paul says that the gift of languages (tongues) was expressly a sign to unbelievers. But how is that true today of the mass of claimed "tongues" which remain forever untranslated and in the closet?

When the Gospel was first preached, God confirmed it with great signs, wonders, and miracles, including speaking in tongues. Time passed and such signs declined. The Church was established, and the message was preserved in writing for future generations. The

canon of Scripture was completed with the book of Revelation (cp. for the OT canon, Luke 24:44). In the post-Biblical writings of the early church fathers, the mention of speaking in tongues was firstly in reference to what had happened in the time of the Apostles. There is no claim that all believers would or should speak foreign languages supernaturally.

There are, however, a few references to speaking in ecstatic, unintelligible speech. This differs from the genuine New Testament gift of languages. And the phenomenon called "speaking in tongues" in the modern Pentecostal and Charismatic movements, most of which is never translated — against 1 Corinthians 14:13 — also shows marked differences from the Biblical gift of languages seen in the first century. ✧

Does Anyone Know What They Just Celebrated?

Christmas, which is now over for another year, celebrates the birth of Jesus (although he was almost certainly not born at that time of year). But much more importantly it celebrates what is called **the Incarnation** (capital I). Intelligent church goers, remembering that we are to love God with all of our *mind and intellect*, not just emotionally, and that we must "have a passion for truth in order to be saved" (2 Thess. 2:10), should inform themselves about Incarnation. Is this a doctrine which NT writers, or Jesus himself, would have recognized as a truth to be maintained? Or would they have rejected the idea that a second member of an eternal Triune God left heaven and entered the womb of a Jewish virgin, transmuting himself into a fetus and taking from Mary "human nature"? In this process, the official theory goes, the actual God-Person, second member of the eternal Trinity, remained as the single subject of that transformative activity. The joining of God the Son to "human nature" resulted in an individual who was "fully God" with an added "human nature." This produced, so the official doctrine goes, a person, Jesus, **who was "man" but "not a man."** Yes, that is the official teaching. Jesus was not a human personality; he was "man."

Is that the impression you gain as you read the gospels? Or did the post-biblical, very Greek philosophically-minded church fathers "take us for a ride," and derail the biblical narrative — eventually setting in stone, by means of fierce, persecuting Councils, the doctrine of the Incarnation, now celebrated at Christmas?

There are masses of scholars who know full well that the NT writers never spoke of a "God the Son" at all. That title is absent from Scripture. On the other hand Doctor Luke, the brilliant physician, historian and believer who penned more of the NT (Luke and Acts)

than any of the other 7 writers, was careful to define and clarify what *actually* happened to bring Jesus the Son of God into existence — meaning of course that he was not *already* in existence.

The glaring difference between Luke and later tradition about Incarnation needs to be fully learned and digested by serious believers. (A non-serious believer is an impossibility in Scripture! As someone said nicely, “The Kingdom of God is not for the well-meaning, but for the desperate.”)

To make my point I refer to the celebrated commentary by Raymond Brown, *The Birth of Messiah*. Verse by verse Brown takes us through a fascinating analysis of Matthew and Luke’s scriptural account of how Jesus, the Son of God, came to be, came into existence. Note right away that in later church creeds, which you may even recite in church, you declare before God and man that the Son was “begotten, not made.”

Do you really know what you are committing to when you say that you believe that the Son was “begotten, not made”? Church is the one place where the most stringent standards of honesty and frankness ought to and must prevail. In that “creedal affirmation” you are committing yourself to the belief that the Son of God never had a beginning at all! He was “eternally begotten,” so decreed the “church fathers,” and if you have any difficulty with that phrase, just comfort yourself with this “helpful” phrase: the Son had a “beginningless beginning.” No kidding! That is what your church pledges itself to.

You have probably not engaged this subject in depth, but let me start by telling you that a leading “orthodox” theologian and Bible scholar admits this: “The idea of eternal Sonship or eternal generation figures prominently in the statements of the Nicene [church council] church fathers and their successors. **But it is far from clear what content, if any, we can impart to the concept.** It is revealed, but it is revealed as a mystery, and the writings of the fathers abound with protestations of inevitable ignorance on this matter.”¹

Now note this amazing information: “Whereas in human generation a father always exists prior to a son, in divine generation that is not so. Athanasius writes, ‘For whereas it is proper for men to beget in time, from the imperfection of their nature, God’s offspring is eternal, for his nature is ever perfect.’” McCleod explains: “The main thrust of the argument here was that Father and Son are correlatives, and therefore to assign a beginning to the Son involves assigning a beginning to the Father” (p; 132).

I trust the reader will take this astonishing piece of propaganda to heart, since he is probably committed to it

¹ Donald McCleod, *The Person of Christ*, 1998, p. 131, emphasis added.

in a church setting. God, so said the “fathers,” cannot bring a Son into existence in time! The “fathers” thus told God what He may or may not do!

Now compare Luke’s chapter 1. Luke provides us with a transparently simple, lucid statement about why, how and *when* Jesus is to be designated Son of God. This is the very opposite of “eternal generation.” Luke knows only and obviously of the one coming-into-existence of the Son, his generation by miracle in Mary. The event is straightforward and beautiful. It is a creative, biological miracle worked by God in the womb of a virgin. She is not barren. But she is not yet living with her husband. It is for the believer in Scripture to *believe* the angelic narrative. If he/she does not, he/she risks the awful penalty of being struck dumb and deaf, as was the father of John the Baptist, Zacharias the priest when he doubted the angel’s words from God (Luke 1:20). There is a profoundly impressive warning here. When God speaks through his commissioned angel, we are to believe, lest we make God a liar. The virginal begetting of the Son of God by miracle is rather obviously the beginning of God’s new creation, parallel to his first creation in Genesis 1:1ff.

Raymond Brown reports Luke’s basic fact clearly: “God’s creative action in the conception of Jesus, attested negatively by the absence of human fatherhood, begets Jesus as God’s Son...There is no suggestion of an incarnation by which a figure who was previously with God takes on flesh...For Preexistence Christology the conception of Jesus is the beginning of an earthly career, but **not** the beginning of God’s Son” (p. 141). “The ‘coming’ of the holy spirit in Luke 1:35b (which explains why the child is called holy in 35d), and the overshadowing by the power of the Most High in 1:35c (which explains why the child is called the Son of God in 1:35d) really beget the child as God’s Son — there is no adoption here” (p. 313-314). “Mary is a virgin who has not known man, and therefore the child is totally God’s work, a new creation...I have stressed in the notes on 1:32, 35 that being ‘called’ Son of the Most High or Son of God is tantamount here to being God’s Son, and Luke does not think of a preexistent Son of God...Luke tells us that there never was a moment on this earth when Jesus was not Son of God” (p. 316).

On this plain evidence it is clear that Luke was unaware of any Incarnation of a previously existing SON who pre-dated his own birth in Mary! Now note the fatal twist which came over this matchless account from Luke: “Not knowing the rules of parallelism in biblical poetry which make it clear that ‘power from the Most High’ is synonymous with ‘Holy Spirit,’ some patristic and medieval theologians thought that the references in 1:35 were respectively to the Third and Second Persons of the Trinity, so that ‘power’ was the Second Person

descending to take flesh in Mary's womb. As we shall see, there is no evidence that Luke thought of the Incarnation of a Pre-existent" (p. 290). Jesus the Son, in other words, did not engineer his own conception! The incarnation of a previously existing Son would mean that the Son caused his own begetting in Mary.

What was the shocking result of this fatal misunderstanding by "church fathers"? Luke bases the coming into existence of the Son (remember that the creeds deny that the Son ever came into existence!) on the miracle in Mary (Luke 1:35). Brown is honest to admit that "this [Luke 1:35] has embarrassed many orthodox theologians, since in preexistence Christology a conception by the holy spirit in Mary's womb does *not* bring about the existence of God's Son" (p. 291).

I trust the reader will not miss the point: the account of Luke and how Jesus was the Son of God was contradicted by the church fathers. And the church fathers were responsible for writing their non-biblical narrative about an "eternally begotten" Son into the creeds, which were then forced on church members, and so it remains to this day. Is not a proper alarm warranted in view of these facts? Be careful what you say in church before God and man!✧

(Psalm 110:1)

Don't be alarmed! I want to introduce you to what is perhaps the most important Bible Hebrew word. It is likely to affect for the good your understanding of the all-important question, Who is Jesus? The word at the top of this article is to be read, as always in Hebrew, from right to left. The word you are seeing is ADONI (pronounced "adonee"). The form I have given you has an L on the front and that L means in English "to." The last syllable, on your left as you read right to left, makes the sound of EE.

The D and the N you can now figure out. Please now pronounce aloud perhaps your first ever Hebrew word, L'ADONI (l'adonee). It means "to my lord." The "my" of "my lord" is simply the "ee" at the end of ADONI (adonee). ADONI occurs 195 times in the Hebrew Bible **and it must be carefully distinguished from ADONAI**. ADONAI (pronounced "adon-eye") always refers to the Lord God. It is the title of the One God whose personal name is Yahweh or perhaps Yehovah (7,000 times). Yahweh is the one God and Father of Jesus and of Christians. He is the God of Israel affirmed in the Shema by Moses in Deuteronomy 6:4: "The Lord our God is one Lord," or "the Lord our God is one," or "the Lord our God is one Person" — the meaning is exactly the same. He is the one God of Jews and Gentiles (Rom. 3:29).

Now please read all these examples of *adoni* (my lord), or *l'adoni* (to my lord):

Genesis 32:4: "Thus you shall say **to my lord** Esau: 'Thus says your servant Jacob, "I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed until now."'"

Genesis 32:18: "Then you shall say, 'These belong to your servant Jacob; it is a present sent **to my lord** Esau. And behold, he also is behind us.'"

Genesis 33:14: "Please let **my lord** pass on before his servant, and I will proceed at my leisure, according to the pace of the cattle that are before me and according to the pace of the children, until I come to **my lord** at Seir."

Genesis 44:16: "So Judah said, 'What can we say **to my lord**? What can we speak? And how can we justify ourselves? God has found out the iniquity of your servants; behold, we are **my lord's** slaves, both we and the one in whose possession the cup has been found.'"

Genesis 44:20: "We said **to my lord**, 'We have an old father and a little child of his old age. Now his brother is dead, so he alone is left of his mother, and his father loves him.'"

Genesis 44:22: "But we said **to my lord**, 'The lad cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die.'"

Genesis 44:33: "Now, therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the lad a slave **to my lord**, and let the lad go up with his brothers."

1 Samuel 24:6: "So he said to his men, 'Far be it from me because of the LORD that I should do this thing **to my lord**, the LORD'S anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, since he is the LORD'S anointed.'"

1 Samuel 25:27: "Now let this gift which your maidservant has brought **to my lord** be given to the young men who accompany **my lord**."

1 Samuel 25:31: "This will not cause grief or a troubled heart **to my lord**, both by having shed blood without cause and by **my lord** having avenged himself. When the LORD deals well with **my lord**, then remember your maidservant."

2 Samuel 1:10: "So I stood beside him and killed him, because I knew that he could not live after he had fallen. And I took the crown which was on his head and the bracelet which was on his arm, and I have brought them here **to my lord**."

2 Samuel 3:21: "Abner said to David, 'Let me arise and go and gather all Israel **to my lord** the king, that they may make a covenant with you, and that you may be king over all that your soul desires.' So David sent Abner away, and he went in peace."

2 Samuel 14:12: "Then the woman said, 'Please let your maidservant speak a word **to my lord** the king.' And he said, 'Speak.'"

2 Samuel 14:15: “Now the reason I have come to speak this word **to my lord** the king is that the people have made me afraid; so your maidservant said, ‘Let me now speak to the king; perhaps the king will perform the request of his maidservant.’”

2 Samuel 19:27: “Moreover, he has slandered your servant **to my lord** the king; but **my lord** the king is like the angel of God, therefore do what is good in your sight.”

2 Samuel 19:35: “I am now eighty years old. Can I distinguish between good and bad? Or can your servant taste what I eat or what I drink? Or can I hear anymore the voice of singing men and women? Why then should your servant be an added burden **to my lord** the king?”

Psalms 110:1: “A Psalm of David. The LORD says **to my Lord**: ‘Sit at My right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.’”

I have deliberately enlarged the capital letter on the last of these “to my lord” phrases. It appears in most translations of Psalm 110:1, which is by far the most often quoted verse from the Old Testament in the New Testament. It provides a solid scaffold and backbone to all the Bible says about who Jesus is in relation to the One God. Everyone knows that “Jesus is lord” but the great question is, What is meant by “lord”?

Astonishingly your translation has probably placed a capital **L** on lord, only in this one verse — Psalm 110:1. They are trying to make you think that Jesus is the Lord God! He is not. He is the human lord Messiah (**adoni**).

Here is a stunning piece of information for you to share everywhere. Jesus in the Bible is lord, not Lord! **Adoni is never a title for the Lord God.** It is always a title for various superiors, kings, prophets, husband, etc. “The form *adoni*, my lord, is to be carefully distinguished from the divine title *Adonai*.”²

In Psalm 110:1 the Messiah is described as non-Deity, a super-elevated human lord, sitting next to the one GOD in heaven. But translations, which always suffer from bias, did not want you to know that Jesus is the lord (my lord, *adoni*, the Messiah), not the Lord (God). The false capital on lord in Psalm 110:1 misleads you into thinking that God is speaking to God. None of the other occurrences of *adoni* was capitalized!

The capitalization of lord, just once in Psalm 110:1, introduces polytheism into the Bible’s sacred text, and contradicts what Jesus called the Great Commandment (Mark 12:28-29). Rightly, Bishop Tom Wright reports in his *Jesus and the Victory of God*, “Jesus was a first-century Jewish monotheist” (p 652). I add, “Why aren’t you?” ✧

Comments

“I found your book *The Doctrine of the Trinity: Christianity’s Self-Inflicted Wound* on the musty bottom shelf of a used bookstore. I was so excited to find that someone else believed what we were finding, and that they had written a book about it!” — *Washington*

“We so look forward to the regular issues of *Focus on the Kingdom*. Thank you so very much for your continued ‘labor of love’ (1 Thess. 1:3) in promoting the Gospel of the Kingdom as Jesus taught it and for your unyielding stand on the One God issue.” — *South Carolina*

“I just finished reading the booklet ‘What Happens When We Die?’ with a sense of support for virtually every conclusion and insight I had come to on my own years ago. It was nice to see that you and other significant scholars have come to the same logical deduction that started me on my own observation that Scripture was not describing what I had been taught. Namely, that the resurrection had no meaning for someone who had already obtained their heavenly reward. How could they ‘meet the Lord in the air’ if they had already ‘laid their crown at his feet’? That was basically my starting point years ago.

“I will just list some other things I observed when the Biblical text was allowed to say what it says, so you can get a bit of an idea how nice it is for me to see them in your writing: On the one hand I was told that hell is total separation from God, and yet there was no problem with the rich man in the parable having a conversation with God while suffering in hell. I noticed that all of the texts connect resurrection and judgment with ‘the last day.’ As you said, some of these things are so plain even a child can come to the right understanding. I noticed the transfiguration was a ‘vision.’ I found it hard for the thief to be in heaven with Christ that day when Yeshua had not yet returned to his Father as of 3 days later.

“During my discovery/transition period, I heard one of the Swindoll/MacArthur type of preachers on the radio make the comment, in defense of David speaking about himself in regard to ascending to God, that he had read the Bible cover to cover and found nothing to negate that idea. I was astounded at his statement (read: Screamed ‘what are you talking about!!’ at the radio and pounding the steering wheel) because I knew Peter had sort of paused in his Acts 2 teaching to make a very clear explanatory point that David had NOT ascended, and his bones were here to this day. Sort of a footnote of clarity so future preachers would not have to be confused about what he meant. So it was nice to see your emphasis on that text as well. Anyway, there were many points you touched on that validated and added support for what seemed to me like the clear teaching in Scripture. It felt

²*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Vol. 3, p. 157.

nice to be supported for letting the Scriptures say what they say instead of being dismissed because only the 'cults' believe what I believe. I loved seeing that observation in your writing — that sometimes the sects have a point worth noting." — *Email*

"I just wanted to say thank you for all of your hard work. Having a passion for the truth is difficult task for many...especially when it leads to a recognized need for spiritual surgery. In the recent months I have started to read the Bible in a new way and I can't explain how grateful I am to persons like yourself for helping me to learn how to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He sent. I look forward to watching more videos and reading more of your books!" — *Youtube*

"Let me express my deepest gratitude and appreciation once again for *The One God, the Father, One Man Messiah Translation*. Awesome! You have helped me thoroughly and I understand things so much better, easier, things just make more sense now, and I thank you so much for your kindness, your spirit of charity to help those who once believed like I did." — *North Carolina*

"Several weeks ago my uncle sent me your book *The Coming Kingdom of the Messiah* which I studied inside and out. I wanted to say, Thank you! I've always had a passion to study the word and your book made the Bible and the message so clear! I've since then been studying everything I can find by you. Between your writings and conversations with my uncle, I understand Christ's message of the Coming Kingdom." — *Facebook*

"Your Bible translation has helped me immensely in understanding God's plan for us. I had that 'aha' experience in recognizing how important the Kingdom of God message of Jesus is. Now I understand that all this time I began in the middle of the story, in the middle of God's plan, never really giving any thought that something so important was missing. Now all the pieces fit into place and one gets a full picture of what God has in store for us with Jesus as King in the life of the age to come. My cup runneth over. I have shared this with our group and they too have come to see what the kingdom of God meant to Jesus and to us as believers." — *Austria*

"I am 100% convinced that the Bible presents the unitarian model of God. It actually springs off the pages of the Bible. I am surprised that I haven't noticed it before this year." — *Australia*

"I wanted to tell you that I have enjoyed every newsletter you have sent. The newsletter always turns into a great Bible study. I look forward to the next one as soon as I'm done with the last. In prison it is hard to get hold of non-Trinitarian literature. Here at this prison every other Sunday at church we are told that it is very important that Christians believe in the Trinity. They never explain what it is or why Christians have to believe

it. I share info and the books I have so others can do their own Bible studies if they want." — *North Carolina*

"Your videos online concerning Christology are very informative. I was raised with a oneness Pentecostal view of Jesus. Recently my world was turned upside down. Out of curiosity I had begun to study the tabernacle of David which led me to the son of David and the prophecies written by David concerning the Christ. After studying about the seed of Eve, seed of Abraham, and the son of David, I came to the conclusion that a man, 'a full-fledged human being' was involved in my salvation. The man, the Messiah, the Christ, Jesus of Nazareth died for my sins and was raised for my justification. We have some in our ranks preaching that Jesus is the Father incarnate in a suit of flesh. If that is true, then he isn't the Christ, the son of David, and the gospel of the Kingdom is in jeopardy." — *Facebook*

Did Enoch receive the promise of God?
Not according to **Hebrews 11:5, 13, 29**
Interested?

www.restorationfellowship.org

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

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: Columbian Hall, 6794 Martin Way E., Lacey; 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.

Focus on the Kingdom
PO Box 2950
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Focus on the Kingdom
January, 2016

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E-mail _____

Conference rates:

Single: \$415 Double: \$260 per person Bunkbed: \$185 per person Commuter: \$85 per person

Room type: **HOTEL-STYLE** Single ___ Double ___

BUNKBED ___ Sheets and towels for \$15 ___

Roommate's names (or we can assign for bunkbed rooms): _____

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 Calvin Center (Circle one) 2:00 pm 4:00 pm

Please send with non-refundable deposit of \$50 per person by **April 8** to:
Atlanta Bible College, PO Box 2950, McDonough, GA 30253