

Focus on the Kingdom

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Anthony Buzzard, editor

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My Testimony

by Paul Negrea, Romania

Grace of God be upon you! My name is Paul Negrea and I am 25 years old. I would like to share with you in a few words my experience of being led to know the real God of the universe and His Son.

Even from my childhood I knew that there is a God in heaven taking care of each of us, but I began to see this more clearly one day when God saved me from death and urged me to look into my past and see that He was by my side many more times saving me from difficult situations. After that experience I began to read the Bible in order to know God and to find out answers to many questions I had. The same year (2014) my parents were baptized in a Pentecostal church. After much insistence from my parents, I decided to attend that church too. There I was convinced that I must repent of evil deeds and get baptized, but no one really taught me what is the Kingdom of God. The main focus was on Jesus' death and resurrection. I was baptized in that church in April 2015 and I was an active member until October 2017, when God through the Scriptures totally changed my mind.

I was reading the book of Isaiah when I came across many verses where the Holy Father was saying that He only is God and there is no other, and I began to question myself, if I am worshipping the real God of Israel or a false God. I felt the urge to put my convictions about God to the test, and after focusing on the teaching of Jesus and many other Scripture writers I arrived at the conclusion that my convictions were wrong.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, never forget that God is one: The father of Jesus! There is no other God besides Him. After being convinced that I must repent of worshipping the Trinity as God, another question arose in my mind: Am I the only one who has this conviction? And I began to search out on the internet to see if I could find someone else to share the same spirit of faith (I was afraid of being deceived). One day I came across a debate between biblical unitarians and Trinitarians (James White and Michael Brown). After carefully listening to both sides, the biblical understanding of unitarians made so much more sense to me than Trinitarian teaching. It was just like a confirmation for me because I asked God to make things clear for me.

Then I made the decision to leave the Pentecostal church and my conscience was requiring that I must be baptized again after understanding clearly who Jesus is

and what the Kingdom of God is. But there was no one around sharing the same faith so I began to ask God to send someone in my life to baptize me or to convince someone through me if this is the real path I must follow. And a few months later I found out that Sir Anthony Buzzard and Carlos Xavier were coming to visit some cities in my country (Romania) that are very near to my own city. They knew nothing about me, about my prayers and about my desire to get baptized. That was like a miracle for me, some people from the USA coming exactly where I live. My prayers were answered. I contacted them and we planned my baptism. I was baptized on 15th May, 2018 and it was so encouraging for me to meet people who have to fight the same good fight of the faith. My desire before God is to become like Jesus, living and preaching the truth in order to be a light to the people around me. Please pray for me and ask God to give me wisdom and courage to spread the good news about Jesus and the coming Kingdom of God. God bless you all and help you to make disciples! Amen. ✧

If Only We Had Listened to Gabriel

“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason *precisely* the holy child will be called the Son of God” (Gabriel, Luke 1:35).

“‘Calling’ brings to expression what one is, so that it means no less than ‘he will be.’ Interchangeability of the two phrases is seen by comparing Matthew 5:9, ‘they will be *called* sons of God’ and Luke 6:35, ‘you *will be* sons of the Most High.’”¹

Reader, please pause and ask yourself: Have you **believed** what you just read from God via Gabriel? Have you fully understood the reason why and how Jesus is uniquely **the Son of God**? Gabriel knows nothing at all of some so-called “eternal begetting” of the Son, taught as unexamined dogma in many churches! No. The *origin and beginning* of existence of the Son of God was in the womb of his mother Mary! This proves that Jesus was really a human person, since all human persons (Adam was an exception) begin in the womb of their mother! The only real Jesus, as opposed to any pseudo-Jesuses offered by “religion,” must be related biologically to Eve (Gen. 3:15: “descendant of the woman”) and to King David and to God (2 Sam. 7:12-16).

¹ Raymond Brown, *Birth Narratives*, p. 289.

The fulfillment of these grand promises is described beautifully and easily by Gabriel, as quoted above. **“Precisely because of”** the miracle wrought supernaturally in the womb of Mary, Jesus is defined as the Son of God. “For that reason,” and that reason only, his origin in time and space, in the womb of a Jewish virgin, is described and presented to you, to be accepted as truth. The Bible is the story of the marvelous plan of the One God, the God and Father of Jesus and of us believers, to give us a supernaturally brought into existence person, the unique Son of God, Jesus.

In John 10:36 Jesus himself spoke authoritatively of his own history: “God made him holy and sent him into the world.” With this simple account our other gospels agree perfectly. The supernatural *coming into existence* of the Son of God by miracle constituted him a uniquely holy human being and thus Son of God in a matchless way. As Son of God, God’s final agent and spokesman, he was sent, commissioned, by his Father on the mission of preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom (Luke 4:43; 16:16, etc.). Do not be deceived by the alien idea that because Jesus was “sent” he must have been alive before he was conceived in Mary! You can easily discover that in the Bible all prophets are “sent” by God. That does not mean they did not begin in the womb of their mother! Moses was sent also. Do not be tricked into the popular idea that being “sent” means that one was alive before he began to live in the womb of his mother! Jesus was literally “begotten in” Mary (Matt. 1:20).

Hebrew prophecy had announced the birth of Messiah in Bethlehem (Mic. 5:2), the city of David. God “raised him up,” that is, put him on the scene of history, and then sent him to deliver the Gospel to Israel (Acts 3:26: first “raised up” or produced, and then sent). This verse should put to rest any suggestion that if God “sent” Jesus it must mean that Jesus was alive and conscious before his conception. Peter here says that God first produced the Messiah and then sent him as His commissioned agent. The detail of just how Jesus, God’s Son, came to be is the subject also of the united and detailed testimony of Matthew and Luke, who provide by far the longest and most detailed accounts of the **origin (genesis, Matt. 1:18)** of the Son of God. Both writers intend to anchor the origin of the Son of God firmly in human history.

Neither Matthew nor Luke presents us with a theological “problem” of vast proportions needing armies of theologians to provide an explanation! The Bible’s accounts describe the Son of God as the object of age-old Jewish promises — that a **biological descendant of the royal house of David** would appear in history as God’s instrument for the salvation of Israel and the world. Salvation is offered to every human person who chooses to believe and obey God and Jesus.

Commentators are so accustomed to thinking of the Son as “eternal God” Himself that they instinctively imagine that Luke and Matthew agree with them. But Church tradition may be nothing more than “doctrine learned by rote” (Isa. 29:13; Matt. 15:9).

A writer of a tract on “Who Is Jesus?” tells us that “Luke teaches that the origins of Jesus’ *human life* were supernatural.” He does not observe that Luke describes the origin of the Son of God himself. The only origin of Jesus in the Bible is as a fully human being! There is not the slightest hint that he is *other than* human. He simply has his supernatural beginning in his mother. Our writer claims Christ was “to be confessed as Lord and God,” but he gives no text from Luke or Acts in support of that amazing statement.² He thinks that “Mary’s son was called the Son of the Highest by the angel because that is who he was *from eternity*.” But Luke and Gabriel say nothing of the sort! Quite to the contrary, Gabriel links the miracle in Mary expressly to Jesus being the Son of God. The Son of God is entitled to that designation because God was his father by biological miracle (Luke 1:35). No other reason is supplied, and it is quite mistaken to imagine any other origin for the Son of God.

It is a relief to turn to the far more scientific and factual accounts of Luke’s view of Jesus found in the excellent article on “Power” in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. The author approaches his subject from the Old Testament background. He is rooted in the Hebrew Scripture which was the common basis of all New Testament thinking.

“There can be no disputing the link with the Old Testament and Jewish picture of the Messiah. Of the Old Testament Messiah Isaiah says that the spirit of counsel and strength rest on him (Isa. 11:2). Isaiah calls him ‘a mighty hero’ (9:6).” The dictionary happily corrects the complete mistranslation of standard versions which attempt to read Trinitarian theology into Isaiah and describe the Messiah as “the Mighty God,” thus presenting us with the amazing and confusing concept of a *second* Almighty God! Isaiah was speaking of a descendant of David who was to be *el gibbor*, “mighty or divine hero.”³ The dictionary points also to Micah’s prediction of the human Messiah: “Micah compares him with a shepherd and says that he will tend his flock in the strength of the Lord his God.” The Messiah will operate “in the majesty of the name of Yahweh his God” (Mic. 5:4). Such a portrait prevents any idea that the Messiah will be God. The Messiah has a God! Thus he cannot himself *be* God! The same

² In John 20:28 Thomas recognizes what he had not seen in chapter 14:7-9, that we see God *in* Jesus. So Thomas exclaims, “My lord, and I now see God in you!”

³ *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 2, p. 299.

Messianic agent of God is described in the royal Psalm 110:2: “The Lord [Yahweh] will send the rod of your royal strength out of Zion.” Corroboration of this royal picture of the supernaturally endowed Messiah is found in Jewish writings half a century before the birth of Jesus. Psalms of Solomon 17:24, 42-47 read:

“And may God gird him [the Messiah] to defeat unrighteous rulers, to purify Jerusalem of the heathen who trample it to destruction...God has made him strong in the holy spirit and wise in counsel with power and righteousness. And the good pleasure of the Lord is with him in strength and he will not be weak. Strong is he in his works and mighty in the fear of God.” The dictionary observes that “in all these passages the picture is that of the King. The power granted to him is victorious power to defeat his enemies. It is the power confessed by the King of Israel: ‘For who is strong except the Lord...the mighty one who makes me strong with strength and makes me mighty with strength to battle’ (2 Sam. 22:32, 33, 40; cp. Ps. 18:32, 39). The king attributes his success in battle to the power which Yahweh [the one Lord God] has given him. Messiah is thought of as a king like this, endowed with the strength of Yahweh.”

Luke is excited by this picture of the Messiah, and he reports the prophetic power of Jesus demonstrated in his ministry. The two disciples who walked with the risen Jesus on the way to Emmaus know Jesus to be “a prophet powerful in deed and in word” (Luke 24:19). The portrait is that of a wonderful “new Moses.” Moses was likewise “powerful in words and deeds” (Acts 7:22). What more does Luke tell us? “Jesus is unique in his existence. His existence is peculiarly determined by the power of God...This is an important feature in the Lukan infancy story...Luke describes the conception of Jesus as the miracle of the Virgin Birth...A divine miracle causes pregnancy...In the background stands the biblical conception of God who begets His Son by a verbal act which cannot be rationalized...For this reason the Son has a special name not borne by other men, namely ‘Son of God’...At the *beginning of his existence* a special and unique act of divine power gives him the title ‘Son of God’...The Messianic title Son of God is linked with the miracle of conception and birth.”⁴

God has not left Himself without powerful, unmistakable witness both in the text of Scripture and in expert commentary. It must be obvious to any unprejudiced reader how far these sublime accounts are removed from the later, paganized view of Jesus as an eternal Son of God, begotten in eternity, and entering the womb of his mother from outside (!), having a fully conscious pre-existence as God, second member of the Trinity.

⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 299, 300.

The “Justification” of Later Developments

Theological writings frequently tell us that the right definition of Jesus and his relationship to God was discovered only after centuries of painful intellectual struggle. The Bible however presents us with something much more straightforward. It says nothing at all about a “mystery of the Trinity.” This came much later. *Post-biblical* writings invite us into a very different world of thought. J.S. Whale asks:

“How did the doctrine of the Trinity come to be formulated and why? What did it mean? As soon as the Church addressed itself to systematic doctrine it found itself wrestling with its fundamental axioms. I use the word ‘wrestling’ deliberately, because those axioms were on the face of them mutually incompatible...The first axiom was monotheism, the deep religious conviction that there is but one God, holy and transcendent, and that to worship anyone else is idolatry. To Israel, and to the New Israel of the Christian church, idolatry in all its forms was sin at its worst. ‘Hear O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord’ (Deut. 6:4; Mark 12:29). ‘I am the Lord and there is none else, there is no God beside me’ (Isa. 45:5). Monotheism was the living heart of the religion of the Old Testament. It was and is the very marrow of **Christian divinity**...The systematic thought inevitably involved a *further definition of monotheism*, an elaboration of the unitary conception of the Godhead, not in terms of tritheism, but of Triunity...Christian thought, working with the data of the New Testament and *using Greek philosophy as its instrument*, constructed the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity...The popular view of the Trinity has often been a veiled tritheism [belief in three Gods].”⁵

This account is typical of the voluminous and fearfully complex material published by theologians to inform us how the Trinity came into being. Unable to face the awful possibility that the Church distorted the New Testament rather than explaining it accurately, our writer above speaks in low-key weasel words of “a further definition of monotheism,” an “elaboration of the unitary conception of the Godhead.” At least he recognizes that the creed of Jesus was not Trinitarian, but rather unitary monotheism.

But does he deal fairly with the disaster which occurred when Jesus’ own creed (Mark 12:29; John 17:3) was tampered with? Why is it admissible to redefine the simple creed of the Bible? God is one. He is not three. God is one divine Person, the Father. “One” will not become three without a major restructuring of God, and thus of the universe. The New Testament contains not a word about any “wrestling” with how many Persons in the universe can be called the supreme God. There are indeed struggles (and solutions) over

⁵ *Christian Doctrine*, 1952, p. 112.

issues of the Mosaic Law and its application in the New Testament (Covenant). But no one amongst our apostolic writers ever broached the subject of a brand new definition of God, of monotheism itself. The God of the Old Testament is the God of the New. No more needs to be said. And the truth of the One God of Scripture is delightfully free of the tangled web of complicated vocabulary of later post-biblical attempts to alter the God of the Bible and make Him “three in one.”

But the Gentile pagan mind did not want to submit itself to the Jewish creed of the Jewish founder of the Christian faith. The simplicity found in Jesus needed elaboration in terms of the philosophies of the Greek culture. Hence arose all the conflict over the identity of Jesus in relation to God. If however one redefines who God is in language quite foreign and alien to the Bible, one is bound to alter the doctrine itself. There was no need at all to go beyond the language of Scripture which Protestants claim is all-sufficient!

Hence the church “wrestled,” wrestled itself in fact most unwisely out of the perceived straitjacket of biblical monotheism, the very doctrine which would have spared it so much subsequent agony and division. What was needed from the start was Jesus’ insistence that we listen to him and his teachings and not be led astray into other teachings. 1 Timothy 6:3 is fair warning, and the New Testament is full of such alarm signals: “If anyone advocates a different teaching, and does not agree with the health-giving teaching, that of Jesus Christ...he knows nothing...” Paul could not have spoken more clearly and dogmatically!

Other authorities who comment on our topic are honest about the facts, particularly if they are historians with less of a theological axe to grind. The 15th edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* in its article on “Trinity” says: “Neither the word Trinity, nor the explicit doctrine as such, appears in the New Testament, *nor did Jesus and his followers intend to contradict the Shema of the Old Testament: ‘The Lord our God is one Lord’*” (Deut. 6:4).

Dr. Marvin Wilson comments well on Jesus’ unmistakable confirmation of the creed of Israel:

“Of the 5,845 verses in the Pentateuch, ‘Hear O Israel’ sounds the historic keynote of all Judaism [and the Christianity of Jesus!]. This fundamental truth and leitmotif of God’s uniqueness prompts one to respond by fulfilling the fundamental obligation to love God. Accordingly when Jesus was asked about the most important commandment his reply did not contradict this central theme of Judaism (Mark 12:28-34; Matt. 22:34-40). With 613 individual statutes of the Torah from which to choose, Jesus cited the *Shema*, including the command to love God, but also extended the definition of the first and great command to include love for one’s neighbor (Lev. 19:18)...Yahweh is the Supreme Being,

wholly unlike all other things in the universe which have been created by him.” Wilson then mentions that “Some have seen complex unity.” He wisely makes no attempt to justify this wild attempt to read later theology back into the simple words of the Hebrew Bible. But he strangely seems unalarmed that the church he belongs to does not subscribe to the creed affirmed by Jesus himself!

Dr. Wilson provides excellent historical comment on the creed recited by Jesus. In *Our Father Abraham*, Marvin Wilson states: The *Shema* “is one of the most crucial Old Testament texts for the foundational teachings of *both Jesus and Judaism*” (p. 122). But that foundational creed of Jesus is nowhere to be found on the books of mainline churches. For all of his good history and presentation of the facts, Professor Wilson seems unable to protest the church’s — his own church’s — failure to uphold the creed of Jesus.

Unless, then, it can be shown that belief in three Persons who are God can be reconciled with the *Shema* affirmed by Jesus, Christians have the wrong creed. They have been mistaken for centuries. They have abandoned Jesus at a fundamental level (as well as keeping unitarian Jews and Muslims away from considering the claims of Jesus).

Let us do some further comparing. We have seen which creed Jesus established as the foundation of true religion: “The Lord our God is one Lord” (Mark 12:29). Now let us hear what Christians were supposed to recite as creed **some 500 years after the time of Jesus**.

From the Jew Jesus to a New Gentile Creed

Below is the so-called Athanasian Creed. I will not quote it in full, but give you enough to show how it unpacks the summary statement that “God exists in three Persons.”

“Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic [universal] faith; which faith except everyone do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt **he shall perish everlastingly**. And the catholic faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity and Unity; neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Essence...The Father eternal, the Son eternal and the Holy Spirit eternal. And yet they are not three eternal, but one eternal...So likewise the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Spirit Almighty. And yet they are not three Almighties, but one Almighty. So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God. And yet they are not three Gods, but one God. So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord and the Holy Spirit Lord. And yet not three Lords, but one Lord. For just as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord; so are we forbidden by the catholic religion to say, There are three

Gods, or three Lords...And in this Trinity none is before, or after another; none is greater, or less than another. But the whole three Persons are coeternal and coequal. So that in all things, as aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshiped. He therefore who will be saved, let him thus think of the Trinity.”

Note the heavy threats leveled at any who might dare to question this amazing dogma! The creed states that you cannot possibly be saved unless you believe in the Triune God! But could Jesus have possibly subscribed to that creed? Or would Jesus himself have fallen under the cruel anathemas of this “Christian” creed? The appalling possibility is that Jesus would have fled from association with this bizarre document, which presents the ordinary reader with rather obvious non-sense.

Jesus patently knew nothing about the creeds of Nicea or the so-called Athanasian Creed (actually originating much later than Athanasius!). Jesus perfectly taught and carried out the will of his Father. Jesus’ own affirmation of the creed of Israel in Mark 12:29 is testimony to the greatest fact of the universe: That there is a single God, and that He is one divine Person, the Father. Show your friends this marvelous summary in Malachi 2:10: “Do we not all have **one Father**? Has not **one God** created us?” That lucidly simple creed is repeated thousands upon thousands of times in Scripture when God is described by singular personal pronouns: I, Me, Thee, Thou, He, Him, etc.

Your child of two would be rightly baffled by your saying, “This is a chair, that is a chair, and that is also a chair, and that is one chair.” Does not the God who gives us intelligence demand that we do better than the official Trinitarian creeds?

How supremely right was Dr. Matthews, long-time writer on religion and matters of faith in London’s *Daily Telegraph*, when he stated:

“It must be admitted by anyone who has the rudiments of a historical sense that the doctrine of the Trinity formed no part of the original message. St Paul did not know it, and would have been unable to understand the meaning of the terms used in the theological formula on which the church ultimately agreed.”⁶

Could even the God of Jesus possibly believe in the Trinity?! Share this with your friends! ✧

When Gabriel Speaks, We Must Listen: The Revolutionary Words of the Angel to Daniel

“I believe that the Bible is to be understood and received in the plain and obvious meaning of its passages; for I cannot persuade myself that a book intended for the instruction and conversion of the whole world should cover its true meaning in any such mystery and doubt that none but critics and philosophers can discover it” (Daniel Webster, of *Webster’s Dictionary*).

Gabriel is listed in Jewish literature as one of seven archangels, holding the highest rank after Michael. In Scripture he is instrumental in the most momentous divine interventions and revelations, to explain great events in the ongoing Kingdom/immortality Plan of the God of Israel. Gabriel (“man of God”) appears in Daniel 8:15ff to interpret the dramatically interesting vision of the end-time concerning the ram and goat, and again in Daniel 9:21ff in response to Daniel’s impassioned plea to the God of Israel for restoration of the city and people of Israel.

But Gabriel’s concise, information-packed messages have been clouded and obfuscated by the oceans of confusing words written to expound them. I hope that the following will dispel some of the gloom! The major deterrent to getting Gabriel’s words clear is I think failure to recognize Daniel’s vision of the future Kingdom of God, and above all a large-scale rejection of Jesus as Son of God, and his replacement by God the Son. What then did that magnificent super-being have to say to us as one commissioned to minister to the heirs of salvation in the Kingdom? (see Heb. 1:14).

In **Daniel 9**, Daniel has discovered Jeremiah’s prophecy about the **70 years** during which Jerusalem is to lie desolate: “In the first year of Darius, son of Xerxes (a Mede by descent) who was made ruler over the Babylonian Kingdom — in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel [not the fictitious pseudo-Daniel of the second century substituted by so many liberal scholars] understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the LORD given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last **70 years**” (9:1-2).

Discovering this precious information, Daniel resolved to pray the great prayer of chapter 9. He begged God to fulfill His undertaking **to restore Jerusalem** (cp. Acts 3:21), the capital city of the Kingdom, and the people of Israel (9:9-14). Probably about 67 years of the allotted punishment had elapsed. It was 538 BC, 67 years after Daniel himself had been deported to Babylon (in 605). Here is what Daniel had read: “This whole country will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon for 70 years. But when the 70 years are fulfilled I will punish the king of

⁶ *God in Christian Experience*, p. 180.

Babylon and his nation, the land of Babylon, for their guilt...and will make it desolate forever” (Jer. 25:11-12).

More specifically: “This is what Yahweh says: ‘When **the seventy years** are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place. For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile” (Jer. 29:10-14).

I stress this *background* to the marvelous revelation given by Gabriel because it bears directly on the way we read the “**70 sevens**” (*shavuim*) prophecy (not strictly 70 “weeks” but seventy units of seven defined by the context). The question at hand and the prayer of Daniel concern the **restoration of Israel** and its capital city. Granted that the revelation of Gabriel has information about the first coming of Messiah and his atoning death, nevertheless the overarching parallel between the 70 years of captivity about to end when Daniel prayed, and the promise of a **7 times 70** period of **490 years**, or ten jubilee periods of 49 years, must always be kept in mind. The first consideration, if we are not to misunderstand Gabriel, is that the principal topic of both the prayer, and its answer in the revelation of the angel, is the **restoration of the people of Israel and of the city of Jerusalem**. Such a prophecy cannot, I think, possibly be rightly understood, if it is to *end* with a destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70!

The real terminus, end-point, is parallel to the terminus of the **70 years** prophecy out of which it arises, and thus whenever the **490 years** are over it will be time for restoration, and national restoration, including the city of Jerusalem. To think otherwise suggests that we are using an allegorical method, a misleading procedure **by which words do not have their primary grammatical meaning!** That method is alien to our premillenarian reading of eschatology which takes literally the restoration of the land to Abraham and his seed. Though allegorically (using that very word) Paul can speak of Sarah and Hagar as symbols of two covenants, in the case of Daniel 9:24-27 there is no such suggestion. We are to think politically of the great terminus, end-point, to which all the prophecies of Daniel lead, and indeed the whole Bible, the restoration of Luke 21:31, Acts 1:6 and 3:21 — the *apokatastasis* which is the putting back in order of everything about which the prophets spoke. This prospect has been the life-blood of Abrahamic Christians.

I think that on this point the so-called Dispensationalists have a lesson to teach us. They are staunch supporters of the “futurist” reading of Daniel 9:24-27. It is at Dallas Theological Seminary that they insist that the Kingdom is going to be restored literally to Israel and Jerusalem, and that that Kingdom will be on this planet renewed. Tragically, though, having gained that insight they have then confused and obscured it by offering two *separate* salvation programs for Israel and the church, **thus restricting the Kingdom on earth and — worst of all — the Gospel of the Kingdom to Jews, making Jesus a preacher of the Kingdom to Jews only, and saying that Paul introduced a different “death and resurrection” Gospel for non-Jews**. But this is to shatter the unity of the NT and make Paul contradict the Great Commission! Worst of all: to make Paul contradict Jesus would put himself under his own curse for preaching another Gospel! (Gal. 1:8-9). Did not Jesus say effectively: Go everywhere and preach the Gospel of the Kingdom which I preached to Jews to everyone? (Matt. 28:19-20; cp. Acts 28:23, 30, 31).

Acts 20:24-25 obviously, as F.F. Bruce confirms, tells us that “**the proclaiming of the Kingdom is the same as testifying to the good news of God’s grace (v. 24).**”⁷ Not so Dr. Swindoll’s massive *Understanding Christian Theology* (2003) which omits all reference to Acts 20:25, the Kingdom Gospel, but is keen to tell us about the Gospel of grace in verse 24.

I will not deal in detail with the historical part of Gabriel’s words (9:25). The point in history from which we begin the 490 years is the decree to rebuild the city and **from that date until** the arrival of *Mashiach Nagid*, prince Messiah, will be 483 years (62 plus 7 or 69 “sevens”). Most interestingly Gabriel continues by saying not “*in* the seventieth ‘seven’” the next events will occur, but “*after* the 69 ‘sevens’” (9:26). This clue hints at the chronological gap which is to be placed between “week” 69 and the 70th “week.”

That view is by no means odd since the original words of Gabriel were that 70 “weeks” have been “cut off” or even “cut out,” for the events of the prophecy. Clearly God does not tell us about every year of the history of Israel, but He has chosen to pick out from history 70 “sevens” of crucially important time. And what could be more significant than the date of **the first coming of Jesus** and then that critical last period leading up to **his second coming** and the final restoration of Israel under the Kingdom of the saints? (Dan. 7:18, 22, 27). We must never forget that it was for that final restoration of Israel and Jerusalem that Daniel was praying and beseeching God.

⁷ *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 380.

With the earliest premillenarian church fathers who wrote on the end times, I take the end of the 490 years to be the final “week” (**heptad** or “seven”) of this present evil age, to be followed by the restoration of Israel (Acts 1:6; 3:21) and the bringing in of “everlasting righteousness” (Dan. 9:24) which in a Danielic context is the Kingdom of God worldwide at the Parousia (Dan. 7:18, 22, 27; especially 7:25-27; 12:7). All the other four great prophecy chapters end with the glorious coming Kingdom on earth, and so I think does chapter 9. To end it in around AD 33 (where no certainty over chronology is any way possible) and then to extend it arbitrarily another 40 years to AD 70 seems to many of us to be highly problematic. Would that not turn the whole thing into a 70 weeks plus 40 years prophecy? I think that the weight of evidence leans heavily in favor of the so-called **futurist** reading of Gabriel’s words. Israel was used to Sabbatical “weeks” of years and was also taught to think of a final Jubilee after 49 years. Gabriel then tells us that the ultimate Jubilee will begin at the end of the 490 years, when the 10 times 49 periods will be over, and it will be time for celebration and final restoration. A promise of sevenfold punishment will be fulfilled. Jerusalem will finally be forever free. Jesus came to announce that famous Jubilee, the acceptable year of the Lord, the coming Kingdom (Luke 4:19).

It would be a chaotic skepticism to change the prophecy drastically and make it end with the *destruction* of Jerusalem in AD 70! ✧ (*To be continued*)

What We Do

We have had some ask us about charitable giving, so we would like to make you aware of what Restoration Fellowship does with your generous donations:

Restoration Fellowship is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. We have published *Focus on the Kingdom*, sent monthly to about 70 countries, for 20 years. We have hosted an annual Theological Conference for 27 years. As a result of books and websites we have truth-seekers in Nicaragua, Peru, Turkey, Romania, Switzerland, England, France, Germany, Malawi, Mozambique, Russia and other countries. We have just passed 1 million hits on our Youtube channel at youtube.com/restorationfellowship. We send out our 8 books (mostly written by Anthony) through Amazon every week. We have material in at least 19 languages (sometimes individuals have translated out of love, but often we pay for translating). We provide support for *Focus on the Kingdom* to be translated into Russian and printed every month. We are, in God’s grace, a “clearing house” for truth seekers and finders all over the world.

Many of our readers are looking for fellowship and have been in contact with **Robin Todd** and his **Worldwide Scattered Brethren Network**. He is sending out updates to you on current plans to start new fellowships in some parts of the country, but is experiencing a lot of outdated email addresses. Therefore you may be one of those who isn’t receiving his updates. If you want to stay in the loop with Robin’s efforts to connect believers together, please email him if you have changed your address since you last wrote to him. Robin’s email is robinsings4u@comcast.net. His phone number is 360-701-9219. Thank you for your desire to connect! The writer of Hebrews would agree with your enthusiasm in this regard (Heb. 10:25).

Comments

“I just started reading *The Amazing Aims and Claims of Jesus*. I love it so much. Thank you! I read at the end of chapter 6 about how we are being tested now to judge our fitness to be leaders in God’s kingdom. I was thinking about this a while back, and I know God can’t afford to have leaders who cause problems in His kingdom. We must be ‘irreproachable and reliable’ as you said. I don’t think we can be or need to be perfect, but we must show we can be trusted. That should be possible for all of us who love God and try our best to serve and obey him. Since starting to read this book I’m inspired to focus my energy on telling people about God’s future Kingdom. I know so many Christians who have a lot of wrong thinking, mainly about the supposed Deity of Jesus, but I’m confident that once any of them begin to understand and believe the Kingdom Gospel the other errors in their thinking will be corrected as well.”
— *Washington*

“I appreciated the ‘Connecting the Dots’ article by Kenneth LaPrade (August), and his frankness and willingness to do the research. Surely if a religious leader is found to be at variance with Scripture on a major point, then everything he taught should be examined carefully. LaPrade’s exposé of massive sin in the camp reveals much about its leader. I am grateful that the author did the necessary undercover work to alert readers as to the copying of ideas which were thought to be original. Is it just possible that a dictatorial leader who has practiced mind control can continue to exert influence over others even after his death? This seems incredible, but by instilling false ideas and paradigms he seems to have done so. Many who have been caught in cults have had to be deprogrammed. Victims only stop being victims when they acknowledge the damage done. I pray that survivors of the Way can heal and be restored.” — *Georgia*