

Focus on the Kingdom

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Time and Space

When we lose these we are disoriented. We do not know what time it is, and where we are located. The Christian message of the Gospel of the Kingdom is firmly rooted in time and space. The Kingdom will be on a renewed earth, paradise restored. It will be introduced at the second coming of Jesus, and we are to taste it in advance, through receiving in advance the spirit of God or Jesus (the effect is the same). We must be born again now (1 Pet. 1:23) in response to the Gospel of the Kingdom. The Kingdom of God is the great fact of the age to come, and that age to come will be introduced at the one spectacular *parousia*, the single, visible, future arrival of Jesus at a time unknown to us.

Yet Jesus gave clear warnings about the events which must immediately precede his coming back to the earth. The disciples asked that very question: “What will be the sign of your *parousia* and end of the age?” (Matt. 24:3). These two items are a single event riveted together. In response — and Jesus did of course answer that question — the Messiah gave a list of warning events. Many of them were of a general nature. Jesus first said, “the **end** is not yet” (v. 6). By “**end**” of course he meant the only “**end**” which had been so far mentioned in the conversation, in their question about “the **end** of the age” (v. 3).

As Jesus continued his discourse in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21, he said, “and then the **end** will come — when you **therefore** see the abomination of desolation standing where **he** ought not to” (v. 15; Mark 13:14: note the pronoun “**he**” designating a single person). Then if you are in Judea, you are to flee with utmost haste. Jesus had one single “**end**” in mind, the same **end** as formed the heart of the disciples’ question. As many commentators observe, in the mind of the disciples the destruction of the Temple was closely associated with the end of the age and the coming of the Messianic Kingdom on earth. The coming of the Kingdom was of course the object of the prayer “Your Kingdom come...on earth” (Matt. 6:10).

The coming Kingdom was the destiny promised to all followers of Jesus. Jesus had selected them, elected them, to rule and reign with him in the renewed society which will come into being at the future second coming. Christians are thus royal family now in (often rigorous) training. The blueprint for all this was found massively in the Hebrew Bible and with wonderful clarity in Daniel 7. In that chapter the Son of Man, “the Human

Being” Jesus was granted the power of royal empire over the whole world, and in verses 18, 22, 27 that same empire and rulership will be conferred on the saints of God, the true believers of all ages. When Jesus comes back, all nations and peoples and languages will then “serve and obey” those saints and Jesus (Dan. 7:27, RSV, etc).

“It is evident from Matthew 24:3,” says the *Pulpit Commentary*, “that the disciples closely associated together the destruction of the temple and the final coming of Jesus at the end of the age...The disciples asked Jesus, as in one breath, about the destruction of their city...Jesus mingled together the two events (the destruction of the city and the future end of the age)... There is very general agreement that in the predictions contained in this chapter, Mark 13, and the corresponding chapters in Matthew and Luke (The Olivet Discourse), the two events of Christ coming at the fall of Jerusalem and his coming at the end of the age of present dispensation are combined” (pp. 197, 217).✧

Kingdom Good News after the Watchtower

by Antwan Warren, Georgia

All of my life, I was under the impression I was a part of God’s “one true organization.” Raised with this mentality by my loving mother, I never doubted or saw the need to question or test my faith. I desperately wanted to put the Kingdom first (Matt. 6:33). Working for the Kingdom meant for me doing the works of the organization. I gave it my all and then some. I believed the teaching that Christ became invisibly present in 1914, and is ruling from heaven. I believed the two-hope teaching that some Christians go to heaven while the majority will be on earth. I believed Jesus was the archangel Michael. I believed their teaching that their governing body was truly God’s one mouthpiece. I fell for it all — hook, line and sinker. But by the grace of God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob of old, I no longer am held captive by these teachings. My Heavenly Father has graciously revealed Himself and His Son to me. By this I am truly humbled. So I must now proclaim this. It’s like a burning in my bones! There is a simple message of hope contained in the Holy Scriptures. The enemy Satan has desperately been trying to subvert it.

We must follow the true message and believe it in order to see its clarity. This is the framework to work from. Our foundation must be rooted in what the faithful patriarchs and prophets of old were looking forward to. I will start with Abraham. Notice what YHWH said to Abram in Genesis 12:1-3: “All families of the earth will be blessed.” Further in Genesis 13:13-18, and again in 17:3-9, God makes this promise of the land to Abraham and his offspring, and He sealed this by the circumcision covenant. The question is, Who is this offspring of Abraham?

Please read Galatians 3:16. The offspring is the Messiah Jesus! Now we can read verses 26-29 of Galatians chapter 3. *All those* in Messiah have a share in the inheritance given to Abraham. Paul said in Romans 4:13 that our forefather Abraham would be “heir of the world”! It was all about the land promise of Canaan throughout the Old Testament. The book of Joshua described our forefathers conquering this promised land and living in peace. God cannot lie. It was Israel who kept rejecting their God. But all the prophets spoke about the restoration of the land with a promised Messiah and King. (Please read Ps. 2:6-12; Isa. 2:2-4; 11:1; 16:5; Jer. 3:17; 23:5; 30:3; Mic. 4:1-5; Obad. 21.)

Again, it was all about the promised land with God’s Kingdom established in Jerusalem with an anointed king. An example of this in advance is Solomon sitting on God’s throne in Jerusalem (1 Chron. 29:23). So in the future age to come, Jerusalem is where God’s throne will be (Isa. 24:23). All the Hebrew prophets and patriarchs of old were looking forward to inheriting the land/Kingdom, with a future Messiah being God’s appointed king. Everyone will be able to enjoy life and peace and happiness the way God had intended it from the beginning. All nations of the earth will learn from them.

Let’s take this promise a step further now to King David. David was a righteous man and he too was given a promise in 2 Samuel 7:12-14. An offspring would actually inherit the throne of David in the Kingdom of God. This is why Scripture always makes reference to the throne of David. We find the land and the Kingdom on that land, and in addition a promised king. This promised Messiah is Jesus of Nazareth; he is the true descendant of David! (Acts 2:30; Matt. 1:1; 12:23; Luke 1:32-35; John 7:42; Rom. 1:1-4). We must think like these faithful Hebrews of old. They anticipated the coming Messiah, the son of David to restore Israel, establishing the Kingdom of God on earth! (Acts 1:6-7). A recap of what I just wrote is found in a speech Stephen gave in the entire chapter of Acts 7. Additionally verse 37 of the same chapter is a reference to Deuteronomy 18:15 about the Messiah Jesus as the promised final prophet.

The Messiah’s Identity

As mentioned, Jesus is the true descendant of David. Unfortunately, throughout history Geek pagan philosophical thinking has clouded our minds with a different Jesus. The Devil behind the scenes has veiled the true identity of Jesus! We must come to understand who the Hebrews understood the Messiah to be. They never thought he was God become man, and they never thought he was the transferred life of Michael the archangel. To see the identity of the Messiah we simply follow the promises of the coming son of David, who would be God’s Son (Luke 1:32-35; Matt. 1:20: “begotten in her”). This is the thread running all the way through Scripture (Rev. 5:5; 22:16). This ties in with all the promises! Our lord Messiah (Luke 2:11; Ps. 110:1), the holy exalted one of the Most High God, is none other than the man Jesus of Nazareth, the descendant of David from the tribe of Judah! The Bible is about God and mankind — how God is restoring things through this unique man who is now our mediator (1 Tim. 2:5). The Messiah was *not* a literal pre-existent being in heaven. This is a falsehood that infiltrated the faith. Jesus was foreknown by promise to these faithful ones, as the plan of reconciling all things (1 Pet. 1:20).

Jesus is the way (John 14:6). He is the second Adam (Rom. 5:12-21). Immortality in the coming Kingdom of God is now possible in Messiah (2 Tim. 1:8-10; 1 Cor. 15:53-54). This is what God intended long ago in speaking to these faithful men of old. This life promised to us was manifested in the Messiah (1 John 1:1-4). The world/age to come in the Kingdom is about the rule of Messiah, the exalted, glorified, first immortal, spiritual man (Heb. 2:5-10). Not a God man or angel man, but a glorified, immortalized human man. The Messiah is the first of many brothers (Rom. 8:29). The Apostle Peter speaks of Jesus being foreknown in God’s plan (1 Pet. 1:20; Acts 2:23). Paul also warned the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 11:4 of a *different* Jesus and a *different* gospel. So, as Bereans we must earnestly investigate these things and always be willing to test. The foundation of truth must be strong. This foundation should be built on the apostles and prophets with Jesus being the cornerstone (Eph. 2:20).

What Did Jesus Teach?

Jesus came proclaiming the Kingdom of God on earth, as later his apostles did (Mark 1:14-15; Luke 4:43; 9:2, 11; Acts 8:12; 28:30; 19:8-9; Matt. 6:33). It was all about the Kingdom of God or Kingdom of heaven on earth. That teaching was built around ancient promises (Ps. 37:11; 115:16; Matt. 5:5). The earth is our home. There are heavenly rewards because the source is *from* our Heavenly Father, a divine source (James 1:17). Also, Jesus has not yet sat on the throne of his forefather David, but he will at his return to Jerusalem (Matt.

25:31; Luke 1:33). This will be a restored glorious heavenly Jerusalem. We are now awaiting this magnificent future return (certainly not 1914 or 1878).

How will we take part in this Kingdom? We must be born again (or *born from above*) as said in John 3:3 and 1 Peter 1:23. This rebirth happens when we believe in the Kingdom message and in Jesus Messiah (Acts 8:12; Matt. 13:19). The free gift of life is for all people who believe in the message and in the name of Jesus Messiah (Gal. 6:15-16; Col. 1:26-28). This message must now be proclaimed, for it is truly Good News! The faithful people of old are asleep in death awaiting the resurrection to receive the promises of eternal life, the life of the age to come in the Kingdom of God on earth (Dan. 12:2; Isa. 26:19-20). The Gospel of the Kingdom is what we need! It will refresh us and change our lives for the better, giving us true freedom. If there are any Jehovah's Witnesses or former Jehovah's Witnesses reading this and looking for answers, prayerfully consider these things, for it is God who makes the seed grow. Grace and peace to you all in Messiah. ✧

They Had Been with Jesus

by Dennis Baldwin, South Carolina

In his blessing on the Israelites just before his death, Moses the servant of God said: "Indeed, He loves the people; all Your holy ones are in Your hand, and they followed in Your steps; everyone receives of Your words" (Deut 33:3).

The picture is of God's people seated at His feet in rapt attention to hear His words. This is such a beautiful image. Paul used a similar image to describe the training he had received from Gamaliel, "a renowned Doctor of Jewish Law — a hero of rabbinical history." "These men sat in a high chair and the scholars on the floor were thus literally at their master's feet" ("All the Men of the Bible," Bible Gateway). Paul said, "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, educated strictly according to the law of the fathers, being zealous for God just as you all are today" (Acts 22:3).

In my own life, it has been my privilege and honor to "sit at the feet of" men like Z.B. Duncan, Shular Messick, Paul Holden, Anthony Buzzard, Joe Martin, Dan Gill, Kegan Chandler, Dale Tuggy, and Sean Finnegan, as well as many other scholars in the Church of God of Abrahamic Faith. I am perfectly aware of the dangers of those who say, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos": "Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, 'I am of Paul,' and 'I of Apollos,' and 'I of Cephas,' and 'I of Christ.' Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Cor. 1:12-13).

It is very possible to get immersed in personalities rather than allowing ourselves to be submerged in the teachings of Christ, which is the main thing, and share the following distinguishing mark, to which I can relate on many levels: "Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13).

I am drawn to The Message paraphrase, which expresses it this way: "They couldn't take their eyes off them — Peter and John standing there so confident, so sure of themselves! Their fascination deepened when they realized these two were laymen with no training in Scripture or formal education. They recognized them as companions of Jesus" (Acts 4:13).

Neither Peter nor John had the "window dressing" of formal training and education to add to their resume, which in fact Saul of Tarsus did have, but people could tell right away that they had "sat at the feet of Jesus."

Most of us have in the back of our minds a hidden desire to "do over" some things in our lives; to have given more attention to some things we neglected. Perhaps, had we given more attention to our "formal education" when we were younger and could retain knowledge more easily, we would now be better equipped to, as the KJV puts it, "stir up pure minds by way of remembrance" (2 Pet. 3:1).

I learned the books of the Bible while attending a Baptist Bible School when I was very young, and at 72 this continues to be invaluable to me. The background in Bible doctrine I received as a very young man continues to serve me every day. The many days I sat at the feet of God and His Son have helped me through some 50 years of ministry and now into retirement. In a sense, when I was sitting at the feet of the men I mentioned above, I was in some sense sitting at Jesus' feet, hanging on every word. I was like Jesus: "They found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions" (Luke 2:46). I praise the Lord for the men I mentioned above, as well as many, many others who have added to my education.

One of the things I have been able to do since retiring is catch up on some of my reading. I am impressed with the amount and quality of good material of "Truth" available to anyone who will obtain it and read it. To me, reading is fundamental. Much first-class digital information is available on youtube.com just a few clicks away. Some data comes monthly, either through focusonthekingdom.org or the mail (*Focus on the Kingdom*); other material is available on a website (21stcr.org) or in a blog; and still more can be found in the pages of high-quality, exegetical work put together by men/women of faith in one of the excellent books available to us today.

May I suggest some good material which, if you do not have in your library and have not read, you need to find and voraciously consume. Make sure you have at the ready a highlighter so you can easily relocate thoughts which impress you as you conduct your search for **truth**, which is extremely important. Paul makes us aware of God's plan from the beginning: "But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the **truth**" (2 Thess. 2:13). It must be noted from these words that our salvation must accompany the setting apart of the spirit of God and faith in truth rather than putting our faith in the teachings of those who are "destitute of the truth" (1 Tim. 6:5).

Anthony Buzzard's fine work *Jesus Was Not a Trinitarian* appeals to the mind of anyone who desires a solid foundation on which to build his Christian life. Anthony encourages us to develop not only a knowledge of, but also a passion for the truth. "With all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as **to be saved**" (2 Thess. 2:10).

J. Dan Gill offers a pastoral look at finding the true monotheism of the Bible in his discerning composition entitled, *The One: In Defense of God*. He encourages the reader by examining his example and following his personal ponderings in his search for his Creator God.

Have you ever wondered how the Church got so "off course" and so far "adrift" from the monotheism of the Bible so soon after the death of the apostles? Kegan Chandler helps us understand when and how it happened in his book *The God of Jesus in the Light of Christian Dogma*. The switch was more complicated than you might think, and emerged in a different way than one could envisage. None of the Old Testament prophets or any of the Apostles, not to mention Paul or even John knew an iota about the Trinity. Kegan provides adequate evidence and references ("And that's the way it was" — Walter Cronkite, 1916-2009).

You thought the Trinity was complicated? You "ain't" seen/read nothing yet! The many complexities of the Trinity are explored in a manner you will find thought-provoking and enlightening in Dale Tuggy's book, *What is the Trinity?* Dr. Tuggy secured his PhD from Brown University and is Professor of Philosophy at the State University of New York at Fredonia. This seems ironic as it is easy to conclude that much of the confusion regarding the Trinity stemmed from the early church leaders' infatuation with Greek philosophers. Dr. Tuggy offers more reasonable and Biblical methodologies for something so important as the *nature of God and His Son*. We must not forget Paul's warning: "See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow

and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ" (Col. 2:8).

I discovered as I pored over his work that the Trinity is truly one of the greatest mysteries ever perpetrated on humanity. The "little chestnut of wisdom" Dale offers on page 7 of his book stayed in my mind as I continued reading: "The Trinity: Try to understand it and you'll lose your mind. Try to deny it and you'll lose your soul."

These books are available at Amazon.com for a small price considering the amount of work it took to put the print on the page. I would encourage you to secure for yourself (and a friend) a copy of either/all for your enlightenment and edification. Get a good highlighter, a cup of coffee and dig in. Whatever you do, don't let them be filed away in your library or sit on your coffee table without serious evaluation. Don't forget to highlight those points of interest you might like to revisit. Arm yourself with the Good News (Gospel of the Kingdom) with which to answer your friends: "Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence" (1 Pet. 3:15).

We need not be reminded that the "good news/gospel" is the "Gospel of the Kingdom" which Jesus taught. Look at Mark 12:29 and remember that Jesus preached the *Gospel of the Kingdom* and that this reference in Mark is the teaching of Jesus, *i.e. the Gospel of the Kingdom*: "Jesus answered, 'The foremost commandment is, "Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord"' (Mark 12:29). ✧

The Simplicity of Biblical Christianity

by Jennie Wyeth, Australia

Jennie wrote this paper for a distance learning class from Atlanta Bible College.

In the readings for this week it has been reiterated that it is possible to understand Biblical Christianity with the mind of a little child. The Bible can seem a mystery when seen through the eyes of a Greek philosopher, and I wonder if because it was so simple they felt the need to make it more complicated. In my understanding, the Jewish/Hebrew people were very grounded and concrete in their thought patterns, whereas the Greek-minded sought for a "higher" plane where there are layers of understanding, some so mystical which we are required to simply believe, even without any evidence of natural common sense.

A child aged 7 can understand that:

- *their Father in heaven is the "the only true God" as John 17:3 says — children only have one father too.*

- *Jesus is Messiah* — children may have a teacher, an uncle/aunt or older person they look up to and respect, and many fictional super-heroes are constantly saving the world.
- *He preached the saving Gospel of the Kingdom* (Mark 1:14-15; Luke 4:43) — children can understand the concept of “looking forward” to something in the future, e.g. play-group, holidays at the beach, spending time with cousins or friends, and even the concept of preparing for that event in the meantime.
- *Jesus died because of the sins of the world and he loves us so much* — children know when a pet or a caterpillar dies, it is lifeless and begins to decay. They also understand that to be disobedient is not good and has consequences, but that Mum and Dad will always forgive and love them, always still being their “god.”
- *Jesus will return to gather his followers and make all the bad things in the world they have seen on the television right* — children know and trust absolutely that when Mum leaves them at school, she will return later and pick them up, and that Dad fixes that broken toy.

These concepts are not difficult. Yet, when it is changed to something entirely different from the natural way of how life and family work, then it *does* become hard to comprehend. It has to be relegated into the “mystery box,” which unfortunately in my childhood I began to believe as unquestionable truth. Why? Because Mum and Dad said it was true and they wouldn’t lie to me, so it must be.

My beloved dad is dead now. I used to think he was watching everything I did, and that was challenging at times! However, I now know he is resting in the grave with all those who have gone before, and he is not watching my every move! He will be raised in the future to give account of his life and his understanding of his beliefs, which were the Greek interpretations I mention below. I hope he will see the truth and become a part of the “wider hope” that you talk about, in the future.

When the Greek mind, instead of the Hebrew mind, came to encroach on the new church members (many of whom were raised to believe in many gods), only within a few hundred years of Jesus’ ministry, there occurred a disaster from which we have never recovered, either in practice or in doctrine. Once the number three became important in math and geometry, then Greek minds went looking for 3’s in the Bible. Of course, they found it in Matthew 28:19-20. They theorized that Jesus must be Deity, a person of the Godhead (they had to, because a *human* Jesus would never have qualified, compared with the Greek gods). They found it in a few selected

verses in John 17, while ignoring others in the same chapter where Jesus himself declares that he is not the true God. When Thomas in John 20 saw Jesus’ wounds, he could see that Jesus was in fact the Messiah. He could see God in Jesus. This was the same principle Jesus was trying to get across in John 17. Verse 23 says, “I in them, and You in me.”

I find it very interesting that Constantine (who sorted out the arguments and settled on the “dual nature” of Jesus/God), after his death in 337 AD was declared both a Christian saint and a Greek pagan God. How is that for having a foot in both camps!

Greek reinterpretations:

- The one true God alone becoming three Persons in one Godhead (effectively dealing with the problem of three Gods)
- The Kingdom of God as Jesus’ future reign on earth instead only being in the heart, and
- The sleep of the dead and future resurrection becoming the whisking away to heaven at death

Once these Greek reinterpretations are accepted as truth, then future generations of children are taught these same beliefs over and over. When does a fairy tale become a reality? Are there really now “angels in heaven,” i.e. those people who have died? We can’t make sense of it, but it must be true because my parents said so. As a people who have mixed Hebrew and Greek beliefs together, we have ended up with a confused mess down through the centuries of church history. No wonder the Muslim peoples, who were not a part of this development, shun anyone who thinks there is more than one God.

Jesus warned in Mark 8:38 that “anyone who is ashamed of me and my words, I will be ashamed of him when I come back.” We must as John 4:24 says, “Worship God in spirit and truth.” We must be careful not to be careless, passively taking on our family traditions which may contradict the Bible, and then expounding them without intelligently seeking out the truth for ourselves.

We need to return to the Hebrew Jewish Jesus, instead of his Gentile replacement. We need to return to that church in the first century, where believers awaited the establishment of God’s Kingdom on earth, where they would assist in the administration of this new government. Today, much like then, there was so much that needed fixing and restoring. As Acts 3:20-21 says, God the Father will “send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.”

The hope for the return of Messiah to renew the world must be reinstated and maintained against all the

varied and essentially Gnostic efforts to remove it or empty it of its biblical meaning. We dare not rewrite the Christian faith to suit ourselves. This is a great, yet humbling privilege for Christians to have a part in the reorganization of mankind in the coming Kingdom on earth. This is no fairy tale.

This central message is the pivot from which all other daily lifestyle activity streams out. John 14:4 says, “But whoever drinks any of the water that I shall give him will never, never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become a fountain within him of water springing up for the Life of the Ages” (Weymouth).

In the reading from Anthony Buzzard’s *The Amazing Aims and Claims of Jesus* book (by the way I misunderstood the instruction and read the whole book instead of only Lesson 1 and 2!), I loved that you say that God is not impressed with our social standing or degrees and accomplishments, but He is interested in His creation living forever with Him in fellowship, whoever you are, wherever you are. This has been God’s plan from the beginning. He created man and gave them the potential to grow into the maturity of freedom. He gave man the wisdom to choose good rather than evil, but they were tempted and disobeyed to the ruin of the human race. The road to the restoration of man and the earth back to God is the story of the Bible. It is a template for us to walk in. Every person born has (or will have) an opportunity to hear our heavenly Father’s plan for mankind, culminating in Him coming to the restored earth and dwelling together.

Revelation 21:3 says, “And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.’”

Isaiah 51:11: “So the ransomed of the LORD will return and come with joyful shouting to Zion, and everlasting joy will be on their heads. They will obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.”

Isaiah 65:17: “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things will not be remembered or come to mind.” Hallelujah to that — not even come to mind!

Isaiah 66:22: “For just as the new heavens and the new earth which I make will endure before Me,” declares the LORD, “So your offspring and your name will endure.”

Romans 8:21: “That the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.”

2 Peter 3:13: “But in keeping with God’s promise, we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.”

Can I take these words into my heart and mind and live each day as if it is already a reality? This is faith, believing in the words of Jesus, his faith. He certainly believed the words in Isaiah’s prophecies as coming directly from God his Father. So can I.

God is in search of people who will take His words and instructions through Jesus with utmost seriousness. It is actually not a very complicated plan. If it were, one would have to have special intellectual skills and ability to understand it. You do not need any brilliance or special training to grasp God’s immortality plan. But you do need an open mind — and a *passionate desire* to know the truth. Jesus described this search for the secret of immortality as a hunt for priceless treasure. Matthew 13:44 says, “The Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure buried in a field. When a man discovered it, he buried it again. He was so delighted with it that he went away, sold everything he had, and bought that field” (God’s Word Translation). I liken this to my role of working in the Master’s business in the parable of the minas.

As all Christians and non-believers know all too well, the churches in 2017 are hopelessly divided (against 1 Cor. 1:10). There is no lasting peace on earth. We need wisdom to navigate the trials of each day and this can be found if we search for it, like the buried treasure. If it is buried, I must search. The gold is not going to un-dig itself.

Am I prepared to soak myself in the wisdom and teaching of Jesus? He had the same books as we have today in the Old Testament, which he understood and expounded at every opportunity. Jesus called the Hebrew Bible the “Law, the Prophets and the Writings” (Luke 24:44). Jesus loved those writings. Do I love them too? He believed in their inspiration. That means that he believed that God had used the writers of those books to record what God wanted revealed to us.

As you say, looking at the Bible without any possible fear of contradiction, we can assert with complete confidence that the axis around which all Jesus’ teaching revolves is the **Gospel of the Kingdom of God**. The genius of Christianity is concentrated in that one term. It is Jesus’ and the Apostles’ master-idea. It is the heart of their rallying cry to the public. It has been preserved for us meticulously in the pages of the Bible, especially in the records of the ministry of Jesus.

It is the Gospel which comes from the One God of the Bible — “God’s Gospel” (Mark 1:14). There is one Gospel in the Bible, the Good News of God’s plan to grant you immortality (indestructible life, life forever) and to prepare you to administer the world, on a renewed earth, with Jesus in the coming Kingdom (Dan. 7:14, 18, 22, 27).

The career of Jesus is launched with his preaching of the Gospel about the Kingdom of God. He came into Galilee and summoned his compatriots to a complete

change of mind and lifestyle — repentance — and to belief in the Good News, or Gospel about the **Kingdom of God**. This is where all true faith and all true repentance must begin.

Can I too learn like Paul how to persuade others about Jesus? Before that can happen intelligently, I need to know and understand God's plan in the Old Testament writings and the New Testament words of Jesus and his Apostles. I have a long way to go I know; however as Isaiah 28:10 says, "Precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little, there a little." I pray each day that I will have opportunity to share Jesus' central message, and that those I am talking to will not see me, but see the God of Jesus. ✧

Comments

- "I have watched many of your youtube videos explaining unitarian Christian theology and I am intrigued and fascinated. Your enthusiasm and energy and your way of explaining things has really captivated me, and I found myself really interested in Christianity or Biblical Christianity. I always dismissed the Christian religion before, assuming that the Trinity was a mandatory article of faith, but since you have shared with so many people the idea of Christian monotheism I became really interested and I would like to seriously explore Biblical unitarianism. I am a Muslim, but I became disillusioned with the Islamic religion last year after doing a detailed comparison of Jesus vs. Muhammad, and having moral issues with certain things in the Quran. Your videos have been a real inspiration and have sparked my interest in Christianity." — *England*

- "Through your books and website I believe in one God Father and one Lord Christ. I'm thankful for your ministry. I am looking for fellowship with same belief." — *India*

- "Although I grew up in a Baptist church, I spent about four years at an independent church. My father in law was the first to think in a unitary direction, and that caused a disorder in the church. Many started to say he was a heretic. Even I warned him. But this situation made me reanalyze the doctrine of the Trinity, for the first time in my life with a critical eye, but at the same time with a humble heart. So before studying church 'Fathers' and church history I turned to the New Testament. I prayed to the Lord to remove any prejudice, and if there was anything wrong with my understanding, open my eyes. What was amazing is that for the first time in my life I saw in the Bible that the Father is the only true God. I was shocked. How could I not understand this before? The New Testament makes some very clear and direct statements in this regard. But I realized immediately that it was actually a revelation

from the Father. It was as if something had been dropped from my eyes. Then I realized that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, the Spirit of the Father, not another person. The fact that I then frankly confessed to the same brothers about what happened to me made me a heretic. I was honest and trusting when I was telling them about the change in me, and that I am the same brother and friend and that I have no hidden purpose and that God has revealed this. But in their eyes I became a heretic. So I had to leave the church. My father in law had already been kicked out. It was a strange and troubled time, because I greatly value relationships with people and especially with brothers." — *Romania*

- "Thank you for your thoughtful and insightful affirmation of what I have been thinking for years. You are a voice crying in the wilderness of confusion. This vision of the Kingdom adds life to the generally impoverished and boring view of what is often referred to as 'Heaven.' This is what we pray for in the Lord's prayer: *Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth*. It is God's unrelenting dream for the earth. I get excited hearing about it. I am a musician, but the life after the resurrection being one of perpetual harp playing on a cloud is entirely too much music for me. The only good-sounding element to that scenario is escaping eternal punishment. The popular view of heaven is not very exciting. Maybe that is why Jesus said to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom." — *Youtube*

- "I am a devout follower of the teachings of Jesus and have attentively followed much of your debates and discussions regarding the doctrine of the Trinity, online. Of course I agree with your position, as any rational person would or should. Unfortunately, I find that although I would describe myself as a mature non-Trinitarian Christian, it seems I am very much in the minority. In fact, of the many hundreds of churches in the area, I find all espouse a Trinitarian belief system. I am hopeful that you may know of a non-Trinitarian church/community in my vicinity, or even somewhere in South Africa, as my search and research has not produced any reputable organizations." — *South Africa*

- "Your work in unitarian scholarship has been of such tremendous kingdom value to me. My journey started in a systematic theology class in which the Trinity just didn't sit right with me. You and Sean Finnegan have shaped my journey." — *Florida*

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2018 Theological Conference
May 3-6, 2018
Hampton, Georgia