

Focus on the Kingdom

Volume 2 No. 6

Anthony Buzzard, editor

March, 2000

Keep in Touch

Technology now allows us to have our own “radio station” and “television station.” Atlanta Bible College will be broadcasting Anthony’s “Focus on the Kingdom” messages each Monday from 5 p.m. EST until 8 a.m. the following morning. Ten different segments will be repeated during that time. Video will be streamed on Tuesdays from 5 p.m. EST. You will need RealPlayer, which you can download free from www.real.com. In the “Location” bar of your RealPlayer, type `rtsp://www.abc-coggc.org:554/encoder/live.rm` “Focus on the Kingdom” can also be heard weekdays at 2 p.m. EST at www.acn-network.com

Life after Death, but When?

In last month’s *Focus on the Kingdom* we discussed in some detail the biblical timetable for resurrection and rewards. It seems to us utterly clear, from a mass of Bible verses in both Testaments, that no one receives a judgment and a reward until after the resurrection. And the resurrection has not yet occurred. It will occur only when Jesus returns (I Thess. 4:13ff; I Cor. 15:23; Rev. 11:15-18; Luke 20:35; Luke 14:14; Dan. 12:2, etc.). It follows, then, that no human being, apart from Jesus, has gained immortality. No one has been destroyed in the fires of hell, since hellfire is part of future judgment.

Popular stories about “after death” experiences should not be permitted to contradict the Bible — which they certainly do when claims are made that certain specially favored individuals have been conducted by “Jesus” either to heaven to see the saved enjoying bliss, or to hell to see the wicked writhing in agony. Such legends are now presented

with considerable frequency to a public eager to know the secrets of the “afterlife,” but not so willing to study the issue in the pages of the Bible.

It is a sad fact that a number of verses are still called upon to support the traditional idea that Christians really do not die: they just “move home” to a heavenly dwelling the very instant they “breathe their last.” A massive propaganda, reaching the hearts of the bereaved when they are most vulnerable, continues to convince multitudes that the dead are very much alive and conscious. This concept could not have arisen, much less gained popularity, had the sober words of Ecclesiastes been heeded: “The dead do not know anything at all.” There is no need to multiply confirming texts, since, as the celebrated commentary by Keil and Delitzsch notes, the thought expressed by Ecclesiastes 9:5 is typical of the entire Old Testament teaching about the present condition of the dead. Moreover, Daniel 12:2 tells us that the dead emerge from their sleep of death in the dust of the ground, when the time comes for the *resurrection*.

On that solid base the New Testament’s teaching about life after death is built. All our present doctrinal confusions stem from our failure to base our theology on the Hebrew Bible and to read the New Testament in its light. We are unconsciously anti-Semitic in our approach to religious Truth. We are gentiles at heart — prone to religious tendencies which can only be checked by a whole-hearted return to Jewish-Christian roots. (But this does not mean saddling ourselves with the Law of Moses from which Jesus has freed us, Gal. 3, 4.)

Of course, it is possible to contradict the mass of biblical evidence about the present state of the dead by appealing to the story of Lazarus and the rich man (Luke 16:19ff.). Here at last one may find a post-

In This Issue

Believing Impossible Things	3
An Interesting Middle Eastern Scenario	6

mortem description of fully conscious individuals, who far from “knowing nothing” are already enjoying the bliss of “Abraham’s bosom” or suffering torment.

Luke was not confused. He had already reported Jesus’ teaching in 14:14: “you will be rewarded at the resurrection of the just.” No resurrection, no reward. What then is Abraham doing enjoying his reward in Hades, before the resurrection? Luke 20:35, consistent with Luke 14:14, announces that the faithful will be counted worthy “to attain to that [future] age and the resurrection of the dead.” Obviously that is their goal, and as long as they have not been resurrected, they cannot have been rewarded. Are we supposed to believe then that Abraham and Lazarus have been granted the reward of paradise before the resurrection? Have they “jumped the gun”? Such an understanding would stand the rest of the biblical teaching about our future on its head.

Wise commentary on Luke 16:19ff. has noticed that Jesus here uses the language of the Jews. He follows a well-known popular story. In the story the “dead” are not disembodied spirits in heaven and hell, but fully bodied persons holding a conversation in Hades. If one is to take the story as a literal account of what happens when we die, then one must believe that the righteous dead are all in Hades, in a compartment called Abraham’s bosom.

One must believe that they have received an immortal body. One must believe also that the wicked are close enough to the righteous to allow a conversation, one with the other. This literal picture will not fit the traditional teaching that the righteous have gone *disembodied, not to Hades but to heaven*.

It remains for us to understand that Jesus is borrowing a Pharisaic story from his enemies and using it for effect. In an earlier story, in the same context (Luke 16:9), Jesus, jibing at the Pharisees’ love of sharp practice, says, “Make friends using unrighteous money so that when it fails, they may bring you into the habitations of the coming age.” In other words, Jesus, almost certainly using sarcasm (“Go ahead! Try making friends with money!”), mocks the Pharisees by telling them to rely on their money to gain the ultimate reward of life in the coming Kingdom.

“The Pharisees,” Luke notes, “who were also greedy, heard all these things and mocked Jesus” (16:14). The story of Lazarus and the Rich Man

pokes fun in return at a traditional, imaginary tale, whose setting is the underworld. It is as though Jesus is saying: Imagine a conversation between Abraham and the rich man in the afterlife. To press the details of the story as a scientific account of where the dead are and exactly what they are doing misses the point of Jesus’ vivid and stinging rebuke of Pharisaism.

In II Corinthians 5 Paul goes to great lengths to contrast our present condition with the new body *to be received at the resurrection*. To extract and misquote one third of one verse of Paul’s extended teaching (“absent from the body, present with the Lord”) and make it the buttress for the notion of immediate consciousness after death, apart from resurrection, is a failure to grasp the overall biblical teaching about life after death. Context is always important. In II Corinthians 4:14 Paul introduces his topic: “He who *resurrected* the Lord Jesus will also *resurrect* you through Jesus and will present us with you.” It is the goal of the Christian life to be resurrected when Jesus returns. Paul sets his sights firmly on that goal. The present treasure enjoyed by the Christian, the treasure of the Gospel of the Kingdom as Jesus described it (Matt. 13:44-46), is now contained in us as earthen vessels. The power of that Kingdom Gospel — the dynamic, vitalizing activity of God in us — comes from God and it is invested in frail human persons (II Cor. 4:7).

Paul develops his theme (5:1ff): “We know that if our present earthly house is dissolved [by death] we have a [new] building of God, a house not made with human hands, fit for the coming age” (poorly rendered as “eternal” in many versions). That new body is now “reserved in heaven” (cp. I Pet. 1:4). Paul continues by referring to our present sufferings, while we wait to receive the bodies which will confer on us immortality. While we are at home in our present bodies, we are absent from the Lord Jesus. While we wait for the coming of Jesus we must continue to walk by faith, not by sight. Our desire and hope is to be absent from our frail bodies in order to be present with the Lord in our new bodies, “for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.” The obvious contrast is between our *present* existence as mortals and the *future* resurrection to occur at Jesus’ return.

Paul has nothing to say about the interval between death and resurrection. This has no meaning for him, since it is a time of unconsciousness (“The

dead know nothing at all...There is no activity in the grave...the dead are sleeping in the dust of the ground," Ecc. 9:5, 10; Dan. 12:2). Only a year earlier he had written to the same Corinthians (I Cor. 15) to inform them that the Christian dead will achieve immortality *only at the coming of Christ* (I Cor. 15:23) and when the last trumpet summons all the faithful dead not from heaven but from the grave (I Cor. 15:50-57). It is only at that *future* collective resurrection that Hades (i.e. death) is overcome (I Cor. 15:55, KJV). (The popular current teaching that Jesus removed the faithful dead from Hades at the time of his own resurrection has no basis at all in the Bible. It merely confuses the biblical scheme.)

A confirmation of Paul's teaching is found in I Thessalonians 4:16 where the Apostle tells us again that it is only by resurrection/rapture at the Second Coming of Christ that a Christian can be present with the Lord: "Thus [via resurrection] we shall be forever present with the Lord." This verse would be obviously contradicted by any theory that Christians can be present, face to face, with the Lord *now*, before the resurrection has occurred. ✧

Believing Impossible Things

It appears that large sections of the church-going public have a capacity to believe what they are told, on the unexamined authority of the church and because of long-standing tradition. Those who sit in pews are committed to a baffling definition of God. It is called "the Trinity." This means that the One God of the Bible is actually three Eternal Persons. God is "one Essence and three Persons." A well-known "Bible Answer Man" defines God as "One What and Three Who's."

This orthodox view of God suffers from a number of difficulties. To explain it one has to alter the dictionary definition of words: For example, to believe the Trinity one must accept the teaching that Jesus is the "eternally begotten Son." The problem here is that if someone is begotten, it means he has a *beginning*. Beget and begin are related terms and to "beget" means to bring into being and existence.

However, according to the Trinity, the Son of God was begotten, *but had no beginning*. He is "*eternally begotten*."

One wonders if such verbal obfuscation should not be abandoned and replaced by the sane words of Matthew and Luke, both of whom treat in detail the origin of the Messiah, Son of God. Matthew says that the Son of God was begotten in history (around 3 BC) in the womb of his mother (Matt. 1:20, note that the original Greek refers to the *begetting* of the Son, not just his conception). Luke says that Jesus is entitled to be called the Son of God *precisely because* (*dio kai*) of the historical (not eternal) miracle in his mother's womb (Luke 1:35). All that is plain and simple. Not so the doctrine of the Trinity, which is fearfully complex and, according to many of its promoters, ultimately incomprehensible. It was President Jefferson who, objecting strenuously to the church's doctrine of the Trinity, said that it was impossible for him (or anyone else) to assent to a proposition which carries no identifiable meaning.

Many distinguished biblical scholars readily admit the obvious fact that Matthew and Luke show no sign at all of believing in the "eternal generation" of the Son. They could not therefore have been Trinitarians. Raymond Brown in his celebrated investigation of the birth narratives of Matthew and Luke (*The Birth of the Messiah*) emphasizes that the begetting of the Son of God is, according to these two inspired theologians, not in eternity but at the beginning of the first century AD. It should be evident that neither Matthew nor Luke could have subscribed to the very non-Jewish doctrine of the Trinity. No "*eternal Son*" means no Trinity.

Do Trinitarians realize that they are committed to this sort of unfathomable language? One of their leading exponents wrote: "Jesus is God only begotten, proceeding by eternal generation as the Son of God from the Father in a birth that never took place because it always was" (Dr. Kenneth Wuest on John 1:18).

Clear?

It appears that enthusiasm to defend tradition makes it hard sometimes for proponents of the Trinity to examine the biblical text accurately. Thus Robert Sumner in his *Jesus Christ is God* refers in proof of his thesis to Psalm 110:1. He claims that in this passage "King David called the Christ 'my Lord' using one of the names of deity, *Adonai*" (p. 321).

He makes an unfortunate mistake with the language, because in fact the word used in the text is not *adonai*, the divine Lord, at all. The Bible in Psalm 110:1 actually gives the Messiah the title which *never describes God*. The word is *adoni* and in all of its 195 occurrences in the Old Testament it means a superior who is human (or occasionally angelic), created and *not God*. So Psalm 110:1 presents the clearest evidence that the Messiah is not God, but a supremely exalted man. This verse holds the record by far as the most popular verse quoted in the New Testament from the Old. Jesus and the rabbis acclaimed it as an infallible divine oracle (see Matt. 22:42-45).

The uniqueness of the Father of Jesus is beautifully sustained by the careful distinction between God and exalted man depicted by Psalm 110:1. Yahweh, the One God, is distinguished from “my lord.” The Hebrew word should not be capitalized in English here. In the remaining 194 passages it has no capital. The Revised Version of the Bible corrected the error of capitalization because with a capital L the reader suspects that the Hebrew word is *adonai*, the title of God. But the word is not *adonai*. It refers to a person who is expressly not God, but distinguished from the One God. The Hebrew Bible is very careful not to muddle God and man. The whole point of the Messiah whom it predicts is that he belongs to the category of mankind, not God and certainly not an angel.

These facts about Psalm 110:1 have not prevented the *Jerry Falwell Commentary* and numerous other writers from stating that the Messiah is here called *adonai* and claiming a victory for the idea that Jesus is God. It is a victory won at the expense of misreporting (no doubt without careful examination) the original words of Scripture.

The Bible does not confuse Jesus with God. It says that Jesus is *like* God, God’s image, not that he *is* the supreme God. A scholar examining the relationship of Jesus to God says that in the New Testament “devotion to Jesus did not involve confusing him with God or making Jesus a second God...Early Christians maintained firmly the overarching superiority and uniqueness of God and their traditional [Jewish] orientation to Him” (Dr. L.W. Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, pp. 121, 123).

Take a few moments to think like a Jew who has the Hebrew Bible, which is replete with inspired

prophecy about who the Messiah is to be. In Genesis the coming Messiah will be the “descendant of the woman” (3:15). Nothing in that statement would lead a reader to think that the Messiah would be the eternal God Himself. In Numbers 24:17 the Messiah is to be “a star arising from Jacob, a scepter arising from Israel.” This portrait of the Messiah puts him squarely in the category of humankind. Again, in the all-important Davidic Covenant in II Samuel 7 the Messiah is to be the *future* descendant of David who at the same time will be the *future* Son of God (II Sam. 7:12-17). Observe carefully that God *will be* the Father of this coming seed of David. There is not a hint here that the Son of God is already existing!

Daniel 7 provides another classic passage for the identity of the Messiah. “Son of Man” (Dan. 7:13) means “member of the human race.” Note that the Messiah is not to be an angel. An angel in Daniel is called not “*bar enash*” (Son of Man) but “member of the divine race,” i.e., of angels (Dan. 3:25, 28). The theory that the Messiah was a pre-human angel is without foundation in the Hebrew Bible.

Proverbs 8 is sometimes advanced in support of the Messiah as an “angel/man” but “Lady Wisdom” here is a personification of God’s attribute, not a separate Person, certainly not the Messianic Son of God. The fact that Wisdom is a personification, not a Person, is very clearly proven when Wisdom says: “I, Wisdom, dwell with Prudence” (Prov. 8:12). If Wisdom (a feminine noun) is the Son of God, who is Prudence? If anyone is in any doubt about this point, Hebrews 1 categorically and deliberately announces that the Messiah never was and never will be an angel. The whole point of the Christian faith is that the virginally conceived human Son of God (Luke 1:35) replaces the supreme angels as God’s chosen ruler and representative: “God did not subject to angels the inhabited earth of the future [the Kingdom of God] about which we are speaking” (Heb 2:5). It is, however, to be under the dominion of the Son of God and the saints.

Another centrally important passage from the Hebrew Bible confirms our findings. This is the fascinating prophecy granted to Moses, and it provides exact information about who the Messiah would be. The text is in Deuteronomy 18:15-19. Both Peter (Acts 3:22) and Stephen (Acts 7:37) understand these verses as a direct statement about the promised Messiah. The remarkable thing about this portrait of

Messiah is that no one reading it could possibly imagine that the Savior would be God Himself. Deuteronomy 18:15-19 positively excludes the notion of an Incarnation, either of God or an angel, in the traditional sense. “A *prophet* from among you, from your brothers, like me [Moses] God will raise up for you.” Now everyone knows that a prophet is not God. He is God’s human spokesman. This is the category of being into which the Messiah is to fit. Verse 16: On the day of the assembly Israel had pleaded: “Let us not hear again the voice of the Lord our God.” The Lord agreed to this request (v. 17), and on that basis promised to send them a mediator from the Israelite nation, similar to Moses, definitely one of the human race. This human person would be uniquely enabled to mediate for God. The individual appointed to this supreme task could not, according to the terms of Deuteronomy 18:15-19, possibly be God Himself. The idea, then, that the Messiah would be God is completely excluded from this classic Messianic passage. A “Trinitarian” Jesus is alien to the Hebrew Bible, the Bible in which Jesus was trained from early childhood.

It would be impossible to expect the Jews to accept a Messiah who is God Himself. Such a Messiah would be evidently out of harmony with the sacred predictions about who he is. The true Messiah must, according to Deuteronomy 18, belong to the category “human being.” He must be a descendant of David (II Sam. 7) and he must be uniquely the one in whose mouth God puts His own words (Deut. 18:18). He is the perfect prophet, but he could not according to the picture of the Messiah drawn by the Old Testament actually be God Himself.

A contemporary commentator, Alan Cole (*Tyndale Commentary on Mark*, p. 199), makes the statement that worshipping a Jesus with mistaken ideas about him means worshipping a false Jesus. No doubt this is why Jesus in a lengthy Bible study “beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, interpreted for them in all the Scriptures the things written about him” (Luke 24:27). It was important for the disciples, as it is also for us, to match our conception of the Messiah with the data provided about him in the Bible. In searching out the identity of the Messiah, it is essential to start “from behind,” from the Old Testament, not from later church councils and creeds.

Israel could not, and still cannot, accept a Messiah who is actually God Himself. Such a Messiah would not fit within the model provided by their own Scriptures. A first-century Christian would be baffled by the words of a speaker on television in recent times: “God came to Mary and said, ‘Will you please be my mother?’”

The true Messiah was not the creator of heaven and earth, though he is fully involved with the *new* heavens and earth. Yahweh had declared in no uncertain terms: “I am the Lord who makes all things, who stretched forth the heavens *alone* and who spread abroad the earth *by myself*” (Isa. 44:24). Such a declaration surely excludes the idea that the Son of God, another person, was the active agent of the Genesis creation. It was “Wisdom” who assisted at the creation of the universe (Prov. 8:30), but since the Lord God acted, as He says, alone, it follows logically that Wisdom was *not at that stage a Person other than the One Lord God*. Thus also in John 1:1-4 it cannot be the Son who was “with God” at the original creation. English translations of the Bible — eight of them — were correct when they rendered John 1:1-4 “*It* [the word] was with God. All things were made through *it* [the word] and without *it* nothing was made that was made.” Again, Isaiah 44:24 prevents us from imagining that there was a Second Member of the Trinity, the Son of God, active in the Genesis creation. God’s word in John 1 is simply the word of God, His creative wisdom and plan. That expressive activity of God was later embodied in the human Messiah who arose in due time, and by miraculous intervention, from a family in Israel just as Moses had predicted (Deut. 18:15-19).

The Simple English Bible New Testament (1978) pioneered a return to a better understanding of the first verses of John’s gospel: “In the beginning there was the Message....” John positively did not write: “In the beginning was the Son of God.” Notes to a well-known German translation of the New Testament point out that the “‘word’ discloses the inner thought of the speaker. Thus the Son reveals the inner being of the One God...In the Old Testament the word of God is often called God’s revealer and to it is ascribed a creative and enlightening activity (Ps. 33:6; 119:105). Both God’s word and His wisdom are sometimes spoken of *as if* they were a Person (Ps. 107:20; 147:15; Isa. 55:10, 11)” (Albrecht, *Das*

Neue Testament, p. 237). Jesus had “seen” the Father, meaning that he had an intimate knowledge of the Father’s will (John 6:46). John’s Gospel is dedicated to the proposition that Jesus was the Son of God, the Messiah (20:31) and that the Messiah’s words provide a marvelous revelation of God’s heart and mind. This is exactly what we would expect of the “prophet like Moses” in whose mouth God has placed His own words (Deut. 18:15-19). Jesus is what God’s *logos*, *His creative plan*, became (John 1:14)

The simple truth about Jesus’ identity as the revelation of the mind of the One God, his Father is easily thrown into confusion, if one supposes that the Son was actually a *person* before his begetting/birth. Such a mistake arises when one fails to understand that “Wisdom” in Proverbs 8 is not a person distinct from God, but a *personification* (like Prudence, Prov. 8:12) of the self-revealing Plan of God. The New Testament recognizes this fact. In Luke 11:49 we read that “the wisdom of God said, ‘I will send them prophets...’” Matthew 23:34 reports the same saying with “I [God] will send them prophets.” Wisdom and God are interchangeable. We can speak of God or the wisdom of God. Though Wisdom speaks, neither in Proverbs nor in Luke 11:49 is she a separate *person* from God. Wisdom, in fact, is “the mother” of Jesus and John the Baptist! Wisdom was vindicated by the actions of her two distinguished sons (Matt. 11:19). This figurative language is misunderstood when one tries to make Wisdom into a real individual. Identifying Wisdom as a pre-human Son of God has been the cause of no end of theological confusion and strife.

In post-biblical times a fundamental problem over the origin of the Messiah arose. This happened only when the Hebrew Bible’s portrait of the Messiah was abandoned and (to the Gentile mind) a more congenial, but paganized model of a preexisting second Being was promoted. The notion of a second Being gave rise to frightful controversies about the nature of God. Under this new scheme the unity of God was compromised. Jewish monotheists were antagonized — and quite unnecessarily, since Jesus had plainly affirmed the Jewish unitary monotheistic creed (Mark 12:28ff.). In the interests of promoting the Son as a separate Person before his birth, the church fathers actually demoted the Supreme God and compromised His unique position as sole,

unaided creator of the universe (Isa. 44:24). It is a sad fact that those early developments, after Bible times, gave rise to unnecessary and often devastating controversy. Those ugly conflicts, which led in some cases to the death of objectors and dissidents, could have been avoided if the biblical teaching about God and His Son had been maintained. After all there is “one God, the Father” (I Cor. 8:4) and one (human) Lord Messiah, the *adoni* of Psalm 110:1 and the unique, sinless man, mediator between ourselves and the One God (I Tim 2:5). In the words of Jesus the words and wisdom of the One God are revealed. In Jesus we hear God’s final word to the dying world (Heb. 1:1-2).

It is worth reflecting seriously on the fact that God, being immortal, cannot die. Nor indeed can an immortal angel. There is only one category in which the Messiah can be placed: that of mortal, human being. It is the glory of the Messiah that he maintained a sinless existence, though tempted in every way like the rest of humanity. ✧

An Interesting Middle Eastern Scenario

A recent report from the Middle East points to an understandable nervousness amongst Israelis. On February 15th, 2000 the Vatican signed an agreement with Arab leader Yasser Arafat. Their objective was to “pave the way for establishing full diplomatic relations between the Vatican and a Palestinian state.” The PLO representative at the Vatican described the event as “a historical covenant.” Jews remind us of the failure of the Vatican during World War II to intervene on behalf of Jews when Hitler was attempting to destroy them as a race incompatible with his Aryan ideology. The picture of Arafat kissing the Pope’s hand does little to comfort the Jewish people. They suspect trouble from an unholy alliance between two redoubtable enemies.

Talk of covenants and Israel will remind the student of biblical prophecy that the prophet Daniel (9:27) and Isaiah forecast a future false covenant between Israel and a false friend. For one “seven” (a period of seven years) he will impose a covenant

upon the many (in Israel). Keil comments, “The ungodly prince will force a covenant on the mass of the people that they should follow him and give themselves to him as their God.” In Daniel 9:26b the evil prince comes to “his end” (cp. 11:45). Translations which avoid the clear reference of the pronoun “his” to the immediately preceding prince prevent us from seeing that the final antichristian enemy is the subject of the prophecy, not Titus in AD 70. Titus did not come to his end (death) in the events surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. The remainder of the career of the final King of the North (Dan. 11:21ff.) is provided by Daniel’s remarkable last vision. The antichrist’s death is predicted in Daniel 11:45. Then in Daniel 12:1ff. we read:

“And at that time Michael the Prince...will arise and there will be a period of tribulation which has not occurred since there was a nation until that time, and at that time your people will be delivered — all those found written in the book. And multitudes of those who are asleep in the land of dust will awake, some to the life of the [Coming] Age and some to shame and contempt, and the instructors [those who cause others to become wise] will shine like the brightness of the firmament and those who cause many to become righteous as the stars for ever and ever. And you, Daniel, close up the words and seal the book until the time of the end. Many will research and the knowledge [of these words] will increase. And I, Daniel, looked and saw two others standing...and I said: ‘Until when will these marvelous events continue, and what will mark their end?’ ... ‘They will last for a time, times and half a time. And when they have finished shattering the power of the holy people *all these things* will be completed.’ I heard this reply but I did not understand, and so I said, ‘My lord, what is to be the end of these things?’ And he replied, ‘Go, Daniel, for these words are closed and sealed until the period of the end...The wicked will not understand but the ones who cause others to be wise will understand. *And from the time of the removal of the daily sacrifice and the placing of the Desecrating Horror [The Abomination of Desolation] there will be 1290 days...* And you, Daniel, continue to the end of your life, and then you will rest in death and rise again to receive your inheritance at the end of the days.’”

This passage at the end of the Book of Daniel — in which the prophet was granted a private interview with interpreting angels — places a very clear time limit upon the final events. The final period beginning with the “removal of the daily sacrifice and the placing of the Desecrating Horror” is to be 1290 days. Then “*all these events* will be complete.” The events in question are clearly laid out in the previous chapter. In Daniel 11:31 we learn that the daily sacrifice is to be removed and the Desecrating Horror placed. This is to be done by the final King of the North. His stormy career continues to his death in 11:45. The tribulation and resurrection take place during the same period, “at that time” (Dan. 12:1). The length of time for the completion of the *events up to and including the resurrection* is 1290 days (12:11).

It is clear from this data that the final King of the North’s removal of the Daily Sacrifice will happen no more than 1290 days before the Resurrection. What is destined to occur at the end of the present age is precisely bracketed between two events. The critical final period starts with the Desecrating Horror (11:31) and ends with the Resurrection (12:2). That period is 1290 days long (12:11) and spans the career of a single individual — the final King of the North.

It is impossible, then, that these events are to be matched with history in BC times, thousands of years before the resurrection. Daniel’s Desecrating Horror is to be placed 1290 days before the resurrection (cp. Jesus’ confirmation of exactly the same end-time scheme, Matt. 24:15, 21, 29ff.). The book of Revelation develops in detail the crisis time of the end and builds much of its prophecy on the same three-and-a-half-year period (see Rev. 11). As yet no covenant between Israel and a false friend has been signed. The appearance of potentially hostile powers in the Middle East keeps students of the book of Daniel on the alert. ✧

Comment

“I commend you on your courage, and for standing on the Scriptures....I too have come to the same understanding by studying the Scriptures....Thank you for building and posting your site...Truth is not defined by the majority, but is defined by itself...How refreshing. Knowing you are there has somehow put a little more bounce in my step.”
from E-mail