

Focus on the Kingdom

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Anthony Buzzard, editor

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What the Bible Says About the Christian's Future

"Heaven is never in fact used in the Bible for the destination of the dying...The reading of 1 Corinthians 15 at funerals reinforces the impression that this chapter is about the moment of death: in fact it revolves around two points, 'the third day' and 'the last day.'"¹ So wrote a former learned professor of NT at Cambridge. A massive propaganda, reinforced from early childhood and regularly in funeral sermons, has deprived Christians of a biblical view of the Christian destiny — which is to rule with Christ *in a renewed earth*, when Jesus returns (Rev. 5:10; Matt. 5:5). Why be in heaven when Jesus won't be there? He is coming back to the earth (Acts 1:11).

It is a joy to quote the contemporary Bishop of Durham whose books on the New Testament are being read worldwide: Professor N.T. Wright is reflecting on Ephesians 1:11-14 in his commentary on that book:

"But what is this new promised land? What is the promised inheritance? The standard Christian answer for many years and in many traditions has been: 'Heaven.' Heaven, it has been thought, is the place to which we are going. Great books like John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* have been written in which the happy ending, rather than an inheritance suddenly received from a relative, is the hero reaching the end of this worldly life and going off to share the life of *heaven*. But that isn't what Paul says, here or elsewhere.

"The inheritance he has in mind, so it appears from the present passage and the whole chapter, is the whole world, when it's been renewed by a fresh act of God's power and love. Paul has already said in verse 10 that God's plan in the Messiah is to sum up everything in heaven and earth. God, after all, is the creator; He has no interest in leaving earth to rot and making do for all eternity with only one half of the original creation. God intends to flood the whole cosmos, heaven and earth together, with his presence and grace, and when that happens the new world that results, in which Jesus himself will be the central figure, is to be the 'inheritance' for which Jesus' people are longing.

¹J.A.T. Robinson, *In the End God*, pp. 104, 105.

"At the moment, therefore, the people who in this life have come to know and trust God in Jesus are to be the signs to the rest of the world that this glorious future is on the way. Equally, the sign that they themselves have received which guarantees them their future is the holy spirit. The spirit is to Christians and the church what the cloud and fire were in the wilderness: the powerful personal presence of the living God, holy and not to be taken lightly, leading and guiding the often muddled and rebellious people to their inheritance.

"But the spirit is more than just a leader and guide. The spirit is actually part of the promised inheritance, because the spirit is God's own presence, which in the new world will be fully and personally with us forever...The spirit marks us out, stamps us with God's official seal, as the people in the present who are guaranteed to inherit God's new world."

Why not stop talking of "heaven" and start speaking rather of the coming *Kingdom*?✧

Christians and the Law (Torah) Part 2

by Charles Hunting

Which Days Do We Keep Unholy?

Paul writes about some persistent points of division and disagreement in the Christian church in Romans 14. His inspiration is "the law of concern" for fellow man. The issue is special days of worship and what we may or may not eat. On the question of varying opinions as to food he concludes, "Let us therefore cease judging one another, but rather make up our minds to place no stumbling block in a fellow Christian's way. All that I know of the Lord Jesus convinces me that **nothing is impure in itself**; only, if anyone considers something impure, then for him it is impure. If your fellow Christian is outraged by what you eat, then you are no longer guided by love. Do not let your eating be the ruin of one for whom Christ died. You must not let what you think good be brought into dispute; for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but justice, peace and love, inspired by the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 14:13-17).

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When Paul makes the statement in verse 20, “Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. *Everything is pure in itself*,” one must assume that the writer’s use of the word *everything* refers to food, not arsenic or barbed wire! In Paul’s statement we find no support for enforcing Mosaic food laws. The Apostle recognized that a major problem is created if we require converts to Christ from the Gentile world to alter their diet by submitting to Moses. This would be to miss the point of the new international faith, “for the kingdom of God is not in eating and drinking.”

Paul in Romans 14:14, 20 was certainly not affirming the food laws of Leviticus 11. In that chapter a precise list of animals, clean and unclean, is presented. To eat what is not prescribed is an abomination. Paul, however, in a chapter which mentions eating and food some 20 times, uses the *very opposite adjective* from the one found in Leviticus 11. There, under the law of Moses, foods are **clean** (*katharos*) or **unclean** (*akathartos*). For Paul, dealing expressly with eating and food, all things are *katharos* — **clean**. Curiously, Herbert Armstrong, in his booklet on this subject, stated the exact opposite in regard to Paul’s language. Armstrong asserted that Paul had *not* used the opposite term from Leviticus 11.

Samuele Bacchiocchi (*The Sabbath in the NT*, p. 134) evades the unwanted information by a similar misstatement of fact in regard to Paul’s words: “That the Mosaic law is not at stake in Romans 14 is also indicated by the term ‘koinos’ — common, which is used in verse 14 to designate ‘unclean’ food. This term is radically different from the word ‘akathartos’ — impure, used in Leviticus 11 (LXX) to designate unlawful foods.”

What he does not tell us, however, is that Paul expressly reverses the Mosaic taboos when, *in verse 20*, he uses the *exact opposite* of “akathartos,” unclean or impure, with his bold, liberating claim, “All things are pure.” Paul here uses the term *katharos*, which is the opposite of *akathartos*. The Apostles had very clearly waived the temporary restrictions given to Israel under the law. For Paul the law (torah) which alone has value is the “law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2; I Cor. 9:21). Paul, after all, had written a whole book — Galatians — to explain that the law given to Israel through Moses was a temporary custodial guide valid only until the coming of Christ. Paul was horrified that believers should want to move back under the Old Covenant, when Christ has invited them to the freedom of the New Covenant brought by him as Messiah.

Hebrews 13:9 reinforces our lesson: “Do not be swept off your course by all sorts of outlandish teachings; it is good that we should gain inner strength from the grace of God, and not from rules about food which have never benefited those who have observed them.” This statement points to the existence in the first century of Christians whose scruples over food were nothing but a burden to themselves and to others — and a potential cause of division and unrest in the church.

A leading commentary on Romans reads Paul with accuracy when it notes, “‘Nothing is unclean of itself’: This remarkable statement undercuts the whole distinction between clean and unclean foods on which Paul, like all other observant Jews, had been brought up” (John Ziebler, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*).

The same freedom of choice pertains to the selection of a day for worship:

“Again, some make a distinction between this day and that; others regard all days alike. Everyone must act on his own convictions” (Rom. 14:5).

The Sabbath

When God the Creator and Father of mankind completed His six days of creation, He rested on the seventh day and declared it holy. It is not called the Sabbath but the “seventh day.” The word *shabbat* is not used. To force the word *shabbat* on this particular seventh day adds to the text. There is no mention at this stage of a weekly Sabbath for mankind. No ordinance with a set of rules and regulations is given. Nor is there any scriptural support to show Sabbatical laws were imposed on Adam or his descendants until the time of the Exodus. That the Sabbath ordinance was mandated for all humanity is not stated in Genesis — a fact recognized by Jewish commentary.

The first seventh day has its own uniqueness. When the first six days are mentioned, each ends with the identifying phrase, “Evening came, and morning came.” Then the particular day is noted. This is not the case with the seventh day on which God rested. There is no biblical record of any instruction given to Adam on how to conduct himself on subsequent seventh days. The word Sabbath appears nowhere in the Bible until Exodus 16:23 where, along with circumcision (Gen. 17:9-14), it becomes the divine *sign for Israel under the terms of the old Covenant* (Exod. 12:43-49).

Exodus 16:23: “Tomorrow is a Sabbath observance [not *the* Sabbath], a holy Sabbath to the Lord.” 31:16, 17: “The Israelites must keep the Sabbath, observing it in every generation as a

covenant *forever*. It is a *sign* forever between me and the Israelites, for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, but on the seventh He ceased work and refreshed Himself.” The Sabbath *originates* in this instruction through Moses (Neh. 9:13, 14; 10:29-33). The Sabbath was included in the summary of the law, the ten commandments: “When He finished speaking with Moses on Mt. Sinai, the Lord gave him two tablets of the Testimony, stone tablets written with the finger of God” (Exod. 31:18).

It should be noted that the word forever, *olam* in Hebrew, does not always contain the sense of permanence which it has for us. It is limited to a certain period of time, or as long as circumstances remain the same. The Sabbath finds its limitation as the sign along with circumcision in the Old Covenant, not the New Covenant. Physical circumcision was likewise commanded “forever” (Gen. 17:13, *olam*), but Christians in the New Testament did not insist on it.

The framework of obedience in which Christians must live is not that of the covenant given to Moses, Hebrews 12:18-29 speaks of New Covenant believers: We have *not come to Mt. Sinai*. 2 Corinthians 3:3-18 contrasts the killing effect of the letter of the law with the liberating power of the spirit. Blindness results from adherence to Moses. It is cured in Christ: “Whenever he turns to the Lord the veil is removed.”³

The Two Covenants

Psalm 110:4 says, “*God has sworn an oath* and will not change his mind, ‘You are a priest forever, a Melchizedek in my service.’”

Repeated in Hebrews 7:17, this forms a crucial link between Jesus as a priest of the order of Melchizedek and the covenant with Abraham. This permitted the writer of Hebrews to assert categorically that the old priesthood and the law have been replaced by a new arrangement. “The Levitical priesthood and the law associated with it have been superseded by the new and ‘better hope’ based on the superior quality of the new priest...God announced His intention to set aside the whole Levitical system because it had proved to be ineffective in achieving its purpose. Its ‘weakness’ is not in the law or its purpose, but in the people upon whom it depends for its accomplishment. Its ‘uselessness’ derives from the fact that the law...was able to cleanse only externally.”⁴

³ See also *The Law, The Sabbath and New Testament Christianity*, Anthony Buzzard (from 800-347-4261).

⁴ *Word Biblical Commentary, Hebrews*, p. 185.

We appeal to Hebrews 7:28 for instructions on the difference between the two priesthoods: “The high priests appointed by law [the Levitical system] are men in all their weaknesses, but the priest appointed by *words of the oath which supersedes the law* is the Son, who has been made perfect forever.”

The writer of Hebrews shows the contrast between the new priesthood, whose appointment was validated by God’s solemn oath, and the Levitical priesthood, which was based on the law *without the benefit of a divine oath*. This makes Jesus the priest of the new age. It states categorically that the new priesthood is a divine institution unconditionally guaranteed by God’s solemn oath. The hopes of the Christian community are anchored in the absolute reliability of the New Covenant arrangements.

The promise to Abraham, the father of the faithful, was also confirmed by a divine oath (Heb. 6:13-18). This oath, not given to the Levitical priesthood, “is the impregnable guarantee that excludes all doubt and gives to faith assurance of the promise...It is final, eternal, and unchangeable.”⁵ This is not the case with the Levitical priesthood.

Entering God’s Rest

We have noted the uniqueness of the seventh day of creation — the day of God’s rest. This becomes a symbolic act for all humanity. It denotes a time when Christians cease from all our own work and its limited aims in our present mortal existence. God’s rest points to a totally different set of goals and purposes by which to direct our lives. But it is not an effortless stroll towards a future position of authority promised in 1 Corinthians 6:2: “It is God’s people who are to manage the world.”

Israel under the Levitical priesthood sometimes kept the Sabbath, the Holy Days and new moons but too often strayed from the faith and obedience which would have led to the rest God designed for them. The writer of Hebrews provides the road back to success by quoting Psalm 95:

“Today [this is for now!] if you hear his voice do not grow stubborn. If Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day. Therefore, a Sabbath rest still awaits the people of God; anyone who enters God’s rest, rests from his own work, as God did from His. Let us then make *every effort* to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by following the old example of unbelief” (Heb. 4:7-11).

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 187.

We are not promised a relaxing walk in the park. We are, however, given the absolute assurance, the peace of mind and confidence that God has bound Himself, by an immutable oath through His Son, to carry us forward to the goal. How? By grasping our status as Hebrews 3:1-6 says, “Therefore, brothers of the family of God, partners in a heavenly calling, think of Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of the faith we profess; he was faithful to God who appointed him...Jesus has been counted worthy of greater honor than Moses...*Christ is faithful as a son, set over the household. And we are that household, if only we are fearless and keep our hope high.*”

The third and fourth chapters of Hebrews define the complete outline of what is required of us “now,” “today,” in order to enter the “rest” God offers. God is now working through His Son, the High Priest at His right hand. Success does not come through observing a semi-Mosaic system. We “have become partners with Christ if only we keep our initial confidence firm to the end” (3:14).

What does this partnership with God’s risen Son entail? 4:1-3: “What we must fear therefore, is that, while the promise of entering his rest remains open, anyone of you should be found to have missed his opportunity, for indeed we have had the good news preached to us, just as they had. But the message they heard did them no good, for it was not combined with faith in those who heard it. Because we have faith, it is we who enter that rest.” How then do we enter the rest which God designed for all humanity?

What is required is faith in the saving partnership with Jesus in proclaiming the Good News of a coming Kingdom of God on earth. Jesus said it was for this cause that his Father sent him. “I must give the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, for that is what I was sent to do” (Luke 4:43). When Jesus carried out this task he entered into his “rest” by doing not his own work but the work of his Father. We can enter into that same “rest” and partnership with Jesus when we cease doing our *own* work and concentrate on collaboration with Jesus in doing God’s work (Luke 4:43).

The field is the world. The seed is the Gospel message of the Kingdom (Matt. 13:19). In performing the work of sowing, Jesus assured his followers that they would one day occupy executive positions in the kingdom: “You have stayed with me through my trials; and just as my Father has covenanted to me the right to rule, so I will covenant to you the same right. You will eat and drink at my table in my Kingdom, and you will sit on thrones to rule over the twelve

tribes of Israel” (Luke 22:28-30). The task was to proclaim that Kingdom message to the world. The seed planted in the mind of peoples regardless of their circumstances did not demand adherence to the temporary laws of the Old Covenant, required for the discipline of the nation of Israel.

The change from Old Covenant requirements to the New Covenant is radical and dramatic. “Thou shalt not kill” is heightened to “love your enemies.” And we are to set out on the ultimate quest for eternal life in the age to come: “Seek *first* the Kingdom of God and his righteousness” (Matt. 6:33).

The New Testament shifts to an emphasis on sharing the Gospel message of hope with anyone who will listen. It demands a love toward God the Creator and His Son Jesus who gave his life in sacrifice for our sins under a New Covenant. Jesus said, “If you love me keep my commandments.” We enter rest (not a weekly Sabbath observance) by faith and obedience — a “sabbatism” (Heb. 4:9), not a single Sabbath day.

The writer of Hebrews is quite clear about the two different time frames. In chapters one and two he points to the exalted position given to Jesus now and in the age to come. Hebrews 2:5: “For it is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come [the coming New Age] which is our theme.” And the subjection of this earth to man is yet future: “You put everything in subjection beneath his feet. For in subjecting everything to him, God left nothing that is made to be subject. But in fact we do *not yet* see everything in subjection to man” (2:8).

We are then invited to see in Chapter 3 the superiority of Jesus to Moses and that “today [now] if you will hear his [Jesus’] voice” we become partners with him (not Moses). The New Covenant is not a mixture of the Old Covenant and the New. Paul sweeps away the Old Covenant and its relevance for today when he says in Colossians 2:9-17:

“For it is in Christ the Godhead in all its fullness dwells embodied; it is in him you have been brought to fulfillment. Every power and authority in the universe is subject to him as head. In him you were circumcised, *not in a physical sense*, but by stripping away of the old nature, which is Christ’s way of circumcision...And although you were dead because of your sins...he has brought you to life with Christ. For he has forgiven us all our sins: he has cancelled the bond which was outstanding against us with its legal demands; he has set it aside, nailing it to the cross...

“Therefore, allow no one to take you to task about what you eat or drink, or over the observance of a festival, new moon, or sabbath. These are no more than a shadow of what was to come; the reality is Christ’s.”

With this “trio” of Jewish sacred days Paul refers to a unit of observances to which Christians are *not* to feel obligated. No less than 12 times in the Old Testament this description of the weekly, monthly and annual observances appears as *one* package. Paul sees all three as a *single* shadow. Sabbaths — annual, monthly and weekly — are plainly and equally “types” of the one who is our Passover, our Sabbath and our Atonement, our rest. Moses is dead. Christ lives!

This is what I see is a fundamental issue: God gave the world through His Son a commission to bring a message of hope to the entire world. We are invited to join His Son in *that* commission. Mosaic barriers to getting that message to the world have been eliminated. We are now free to move around the world. I may well be in Malawi during the days of Unleavened Bread. Breadcrumbs in the houses will not be an issue. They will be lucky to have had any bread to produce crumbs!

It is an enormous blessing to possess the knowledge of the unique God of Israel. The same belief is held by millions of Jews. Over a billion Muslims also believe there is One God. Unfortunately for the Jews they look to Moses. They have rejected the Messiah who came. The Muslims look to Mohammed. Some believers in Jesus still look partly to Moses and not fully to the Messiah who came not to abolish the Torah but to *complete it*. Paul insists that compromising the Old with the New is a way to blindness. 2 Corinthians 3:14-16:

“In any case their minds had become closed. For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away. Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts. But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed.”✧

The Son of God Cannot Preexist His Own Mother!

Jesus, Son of God, is the son of Mary (Mark 6:3). Paul’s use of *ginesthai* in Galatians 4:4 (and Rom. 1:3) is very remarkable, as many have pointed out. Paul said that the Son of God **came into existence** (from *ginesthai*), using a *special word*, not just the usual word for being born (which he uses in the same letter for others who were normally

conceived). The fact that the Son “came into existence” from Mary (Gal. 4:4) proves that the Son was not *already* in existence. If he had been, this would not have been a *coming into existence* as Son of God. It would have been some sort of transition from one form to another, about which Matthew and Luke know nothing at all.

The importance of this subject is, of course, that we are to believe in the Messiah Jesus, *the man*. A pre-human person is not really human! You cannot be before you are. We have to be on guard against “Jesuses” who are not really the real Jesus (2 Cor. 11:1-4). A “Michael the Archangel Jesus” is not the human Messiah of the Bible. Nor is a God-Jesus.

Distinguished exegete James Dunn gives a lucid account of Luke’s view of Jesus: He says, “Luke 1:35 speaks of a **begetting**; [it is] a *becoming* which is in view, the *coming into existence* of one who will be called, and will in fact be the Son of God, not the transition of a preexistent being to become the soul of a human baby or the metamorphosis of a divine being into a human fetus...Luke’s intention is clearly to describe the creative process of begetting...Similarly in Acts there is no sign of any Christology of preexistence” (*Christology in the Making*, p. 51).

Rather curiously a recent book (1998) by the systematician at the seminary of the Free Church of Scotland seems to be trying to get rid of this evidence by saying (surely quite inaccurately) that “Luke uses the language of creation and not of generation” (*The Person of Christ*, p. 33).

In fact Luke 1:35 makes it clear that “the holy one to be **generated** will be the Son of God,” and it is precisely (*dio kai*) as a result of that miracle in Mary that the child will be **the Son of God**. The Bible in fact offers no alternative or contradicting reason for Jesus being the unique Son of God other than the miracle performed by God. This portrait of the Son is powerful, and it stems from a recent miracle by God *closer* to us in time than the creation in Genesis.

Luke 1:35 allows for no Son before the Son! So 1 John 5:18 (not KJV) confirms the *begetting* of the Son in line with Matthew 1:20 and Luke 1:35. Jesus “came to be” some two thousand years ago. There is no prehistoric Son of God in the Bible, other than in the counsels of God. One can only come into existence once, unless we are talking about death and a subsequent resurrection — which is another issue.✧

Comments

“I have been studying your newsletter for many years. I appreciate the care with which you do your exegesis. I find it a necessity to have available such sound and thorough teaching material in this age of anti-intellectualism and superficiality. Your ministry has been an important part of my spiritual growth and education.” — *Canada*

“I was a Jehovah’s Witness for over 30 years until I found out that they have been misleading their millions of members and, tragically, fit the false prophet label. I often wondered with over 12 Armageddon predictions if God Himself was asleep when they didn’t happen! I’ve been reading your booklets, and you have made more sense of the Bible than anyone I have encountered in my 53 years of searching for the true God...Reading your material was considered by them an apostate move on my behalf. They really want to keep you ignorant of the truth which they say only they have. I wish they could read your material. It would shatter their complacency. So they disfellowshipped me. I was relieved to be able to search the truth for myself. They have even changed the Bible in some passages. I had to get a new one. Jesus has really given you some talents, and I believe in what you have to say concerning the Christ.” — *Pennsylvania*

“I am currently writing my dissertation and have chosen to write a rebuttal against Tertullian’s treatise, *Against Praxeas*. I subscribe to the undivided monotheism of the Bible and have silently resented the offish treatment by ‘orthodoxy’ because of my views. I was pleasantly surprised at finding your book, *The Doctrine of the Trinity: Christianity’s Self-Inflicted Wound*. The research and scholarship is excellent! In fact, your book has been a source for a number of citations in my doctoral work. Thank you for the labor of love and your zeal for ‘the one and only God.’” — *Florida*

“I am student of theology at the University of Helsinki, Finland. I am very interested in exegesis. I studied at Yeshiva (Jewish religion school) here in Finland on Sundays for almost two years. There my eyes were opened: Trinity is not scriptural! At first I felt that I was blaspheming God for even thinking that way. Now those times feel so distant. I have discussions/debates with fellow students in the university and with other people too. Many times the Trinity is the reason for those discussions. I think that your book *The Doctrine of the Trinity: Christianity’s Self-Inflicted Wound* is the best book available regarding the Trinity-issue. According to my belief, it

is very important to know your God. And if Messiah is not one person in the multipersonal Godhead of Israel, that error must be fixed. That multipersonal God-issue is one of the great errors which Christianity believes It has to be repaired. I spoke with a few friends of mine and told them that maybe I could get copies of this valuable book to them. After hearing the possibility to get this book full of riches, they were filled with joy. I don’t know if this is a worldwide phenomenon, but at least I see a growing interest in these great questions here in Finland.”

“I have just finished reading your book *The Doctrine of the Trinity: Christianity’s Self-Inflicted Wound*, and speaking as a life-long Trinitarian, you have made me think. Your book is a clear demonstration of how we become so used to certain doctrines that we never call them into question. I cannot say I am ready to abandon my Trinitarian roots completely, but you have encouraged me to study the matter further.” — *Indiana*

“As I am extremely interested in the subject of the Kingdom of God and have as yet to hear a proper sermon on it, I will be extremely grateful to receive these magazines in relation to the Kingdom.” — *Indiana*

“I just want you to know what a great blessing you have been to help me to come to a more accurate understanding about God and His Son Jesus. I want to thank you for your courage and for your diligence to keep writing and teaching and reaching out to others who have been caught in the ‘traditional’ misunderstanding that began so long ago that people today think it is the truth right out of the Bible, when it is really a perversion of the truth.” — *Texas*

Dear friends of the Theological Conference,

With this letter we want to extend an invitation to our thirteenth annual Theological Conference to be held at Cornerstone Bible Church, close to Atlanta Bible College. We plan to meet from Friday, April 23, 2004, starting at 9:00 am, until Sunday, April 25th, ending with lunch together. We would love to see you here in Georgia and we have chosen the most beautiful time of the year for the conference.

Some of you had mentioned the difficulty of travel during the winter months. Georgia is warm and beautiful in April. We think you will like the accommodation at the Hampton Inn, McDonough, and we plan to provide transportation there from Hartsfield Airport on Thursday, April 22nd, the day before the conference begins, and also back to the airport on Sunday.

We sincerely hope you can be with us for these special days. The conference has been a success in years past because of the fascinating mix of truth-seeking persons from many parts of the world.

Thanks to the Internet, local advertising and the massive interest in the Bible around the world, Atlanta Bible College and the *Journal from the Radical Reformation's* circle of friends of the Truth of the Abrahamic faith has been extended. A large amount of literature promoting the Messianic faith of Jesus and first-century understanding of God and the Gospel is circulating. Advertising locally has brought many new students to the college. Our Trinity book — *Christianity's Self-Inflicted Wound* — is about to be in its sixth language.

If you can make the journey to be with us, we think you will enjoy rich fellowship and be strengthened to continue the battle for truth in which we are involved. The conference is a place to make brand new acquaintances as well as to renew old ones.

We will be blessed by having as guest lecturer Dr. Colin Brown of Fuller Seminary. He is a distinguished specialist in the field of Christology and has expressed a great sympathy for our “unusual” views of Jesus as the human Messiah. We know you will be enriched by his penetrating remarks on John’s prologue and Philippians 2. Dr. Brown is of English descent but has been professor of Systematic Theology at Fuller since 1978. He is the general editor of the prestigious *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, the “state of the art” authority on biblical words.

The tragic state of the world compels us all to tighten our grip on faith and above all to become better informed about what we believe. This will lead to a greater confidence and influence for good in the world in which we are all responsible to be lights.

We plan to devote two sessions to issues of Christology and will have presentations from Alex Hall, pastor of the Abrahamic group in London. An exciting new speaker from Australia, formerly a Church of Christ pastor, will tell of his journey into our biblical unitarian faith and offer his thoughts on Babylon in prophecy. David Maas will address concerns relating to the Christian and the state.

There will be an impressive unity amongst our speakers and ample opportunity for many of you to present your “faith story” from any angle you choose. These mini-presentations (10 minutes at the most, if possible!) provide some of the most delightful parts of our conference. Please do plan to give us a report on your journey of faith so far.

A half-hour question and answer session follows each of the formal presentations.

As usual the proceedings will be filmed and we have noticed that much of the conference’s value lies in its extended influence by way of video.

If you have any questions at all, please phone Atlanta Bible College at 800-347-4261 or email me, Anthony Buzzard, at anthonybuzzard@mindspring.com.

Please let your friends from all over know about this gathering. Do encourage them to come. For some this is the only opportunity of meeting with others of like-minded faith. We all benefit so much from the insights and talents of other members of the body of Christ.

Below are the details of accommodation and costs. Please note that transportation from Atlanta’s Hartsfield Airport is included in the registration fee. *Please book your flight according to the shuttle schedule below.* We plan to cater three of the meals at the conference site and suggest that you go out for the other two meals.

Accommodation is available at the Hampton Inn, McDonough. The block rate of \$69 per night may be reserved by calling 770-914-0077 **by April 7** and mentioning Atlanta Bible College and confirmation number **86416808**. The rate includes continental breakfast. A free shuttle will run from the airport to the Hampton Inn on Thursday, April 22nd at **2, 4, 6, and 8 pm**. Please go to the ground transportation area and look for the Atlanta Bible College van. Shuttle between Hampton Inn and Cornerstone will be provided. Registration is \$69 **before April 7**, \$79 after. This includes three meals. Register online or by mail. Questions, please call 800-347-4261.

Theological Conference 2004 Online Registration (add \$5 processing fee)

- 1.) Go to <http://www.abc-coggc.org/ABC/TC04Registration.htm>
- 2.) Choose an airport shuttle option
- 3.) Click “Register” to enter payment information (you will be directed to PayPal, a third-party secure website)
- 4.) Follow the instructions to complete your registration

Theological Conference 2004 Mail-In Registration

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail address _____

**Return with check made out to: Atlanta Bible College,
PO Box 100,000, Morrow, GA 30260**
\$69 before April 7, \$79 after