

# Focus on the Kingdom

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Anthony Buzzard, editor

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## A Translation of John's Gospel from the Greek, Chapter 1, Anthony Buzzard

In the beginning there was God's Grand Design, the declaration of His Intention and Purpose, and that declaration was with God as His project, and it was fully expressive of God Himself. This was with God in the beginning. Everything came into being through it, and without it nothing of what came into being existed. In it there was life and that life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness and the darkness does not overwhelm it. There came on the scene of history a man commissioned by God. His name was John. This man came as a witness [a preacher of the Gospel of the Kingdom, Matt. 3:2] so that he might bear witness to the light and that everyone might believe through him. He was not the Light himself, but he witnessed concerning the light. This was the genuine light which enlightens every man coming into the world.

He was in the world and the world came into existence through him, and the world did not recognize him. He came to his own land and his own people did not accept him. As many, however, as did accept him, to these he gave the right to become children of God — namely the ones believing in his Gospel revelation, his religion. These were born not from blood, nor from the desire of the flesh nor from the desire of a male, but from God. And the word became a human being and tabernacled among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of a uniquely begotten Son from a Father, full of grace and truth.

John witnessed concerning him and cried out with these words, "This was the one of whom I said, 'The one coming after me has now moved ahead of me, because he always was my superior.'" Because from his fullness all of us have received grace followed by grace. Because the law was given by God through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time. A uniquely begotten Son, one who is in the bosom of the Father — he has explained God. And this is the witness of John, when the Jews sent a commission of priests and Levites to him from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" And he confessed and did not deny, "I am not the Christ." And they asked him, "Who are you? Are you Elijah?" And he said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" And

he answered, "No." And they said to him, "Who are you? So that we can give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord God,' as Isaiah the prophet spoke." And the ones sent were from the Pharisees. And they asked him a further question, "Why do you baptize if you are not the Messiah, or Elijah or the prophet who was to come?" John answered them, "I am baptizing in water. Among you there stands one whom you do not recognize — the one coming after me, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie." These things happened in Bethany beyond the Jordan where John was baptizing.

The next day he saw Jesus coming towards him and he said, "This is the lamb of God, the one who removes the sin of the world. This is the one of whom I said, 'After me there comes a man who has now moved ahead of me, because he was always my superior.' And I did not recognize him, but so that he might be recognized by Israel for that reason I came baptizing with water." And John witnessed with these words: "I saw the spirit descending as a dove out of heaven and remaining on him, and I did not recognize him. But the one who sent me to baptize in water spoke to me and said, 'The one on whom you see the spirit descending and remaining on him, he is the one who baptizes with holy spirit.' And I saw this, and I have witnessed to the fact that this is the Son of the One God."

On the next day again John stood with two of his disciples, and seeing Jesus walking by, he said, "This is the Lamb of the One God." And the two disciples heard him speaking and followed Jesus. Jesus, turning round and seeing them following him, said, "What are you looking for?" They said, "Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are you staying?" And he said to them, "Come and see." And so they went and saw where he was staying and remained with him that whole day. And it was about the tenth hour. This was Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, one of the two who had heard from John and followed him. He first found his brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which translated means the Christ). He

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brought him to Jesus, and Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John. You will be called Cephas, which translated means Peter." The next day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and he found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip then found Nathaniel and said to him, "The one about whom Moses wrote in the law and whom the prophets mentioned, we have found, Jesus, the son of Joseph from Nazareth." Nathaniel said to him, "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" Philip said, "Come and see." Jesus saw Nathaniel coming towards him and he said of him, "Behold a genuine Israelite in whom there is no guile." Nathaniel said to him, "How is it that you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, I saw you under the fig tree." Nathaniel answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God. You are the King of Israel." Jesus answered him with these words: "Because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree, you are a believer? You will see greater things than this." And he said to him, "I tell you on the authority of my Father, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man." ✧

## Adoni and Adonai

by William Kilgore

*William Kilgore does not agree with our non-Trinitarian, Socinian view of Christ as beginning in the womb of Mary, but he was most honest in his assessment of the major point we made about who Jesus is. We presented the following information on Psalm 110:1*

*Psalm 110:1, a text so beloved by the NT writers that it appears 23 times in their writings, presents two "lords." The second "lord" addressed by the Lord Yahweh is named adoni in the Hebrew, which in English means "my lord." It is a title given 195 times in the OT to superiors who are not God. It applies to the King, to a husband and other superiors and sometimes to angels. But adoni is never a title of Deity. For Deity the OT reserves another form of the word "lord," namely Adonai. This title for the one God appears 449 times.*

*We noted that many commentaries and even the marginal note at Acts 2:34 in an earlier printing of the NASB (now corrected after we pointed out the error) wrongly state the facts about this important designation of the Messiah. They misreport the word as Adonai, a title for Deity. The word in fact is adoni, which is a title for one who is not Deity. This should provide students with a large clue about the identity of Jesus in relation to the One God, his Father.*

## WORD-STUDIES — PART II:

In issue #9 (July 5, 1998) I wrote about the folly that is sometimes exhibited in so-called "word studies." I offered three examples of such. In my third example I mentioned an article which sought to prove that Jesus is not God by appealing to the Hebrew of Psalm 110:1. This particular item generated some correspondence between the author of that article and myself. While we both stand by our Christology (I am Trinitarian; he is Socinian), nevertheless I felt that a clarification was in order.

While I maintain that the article's author draws erroneous conclusions from his research, he *does* point out a widely promoted error among Trinitarians. Simply put, this error is the contention that the "my lord" of Psalm 110:1 is the Hebrew "Adonai," a word reserved for THE LORD, God Himself. Although I am an orthodox Trinitarian, error is error — and this notion is error. The word translated "my lord" (in reference to Jesus) is a form of *adon* (that form being *adoni*), but is not *adonai*. This mistaken idea permeates Trinitarian articles and books, being committed again and again.

For instance, one of my favorite Bible teachers writes, "In the most commonly quoted Old Testament passage in the New Testament, Psalm 110, David says, 'The Lord said to my Lord' or 'Yahweh said to my Adonai' (Ps. 110:1). The New Testament application of this verse saw it stressing the divinity, authority, and sovereignty of Christ when Yahweh, the Father, addressed Adonai, the Son" (R.C. Sproul, *Tabletalk*, "Adonai, God is Lord," December, 1995). This is simply not true.

The fact that "my lord" in Psalm 110:1 is not *adonai* can be easily verified by anyone with a *Strong's Concordance* (although verifying that it is *adoni* will require a lexicon). Among the lessons here we can glean the following: 1) Even good orthodox Bible teachers make mistakes. Those at Berea checked out even the Apostle Paul (Acts 17:11)!

2) Genuine errors can be made in the name of defending truth. Most importantly, such errors are never justified simply because they are made while defending truth. In fact, the cause of orthodoxy is actually hurt by such error. It gives others cause to attack the truth.

In short, the long-standing error involving the idea that *adonai* is in Psalm 110:1 has probably become so commonplace among evangelicals that all of those employing it no doubt have no idea that it is not true. It has been "handed down." I pray they all start checking their facts. This is just as much a "sloppy word-study" error as any. ✧

## The Need of the Kingdom

by Greg Deuble

(A précis of George Eldon Ladd's *A Theology of the New Testament*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975)

*Greg Deuble values, as we do, much of the work done by the late Professor Ladd of Fuller Seminary on Jesus' favorite doctrine, and the substance of his Gospel, the Kingdom of God. Here he summarizes the gems gathered from Ladd's well-known textbook.*

After being baptized by John the Baptist, Jesus entered on a ministry of proclaiming the Kingdom of God (Mk. 1:14-15; Mt. 4:23). "We cannot understand the message and miracles of Jesus unless they are interpreted in the setting of his view of the world and man, and the need for the coming of the Kingdom." "Modern scholarship is quite unanimous in the opinion that the Kingdom of God was the central message of Jesus."

The idea of a new redeemed order was a favorite hope of the OT prophets who looked forward to the Day of the Lord, a divine visitation to purge the world of evil and to establish God's perfect reign in the earth. There developed a tension between this present evil age and the Age to Come. This background "provides the framework for Jesus' entire message and ministry as reported by the Synoptic Gospels" (Mt. 12:32; Mk. 10:30). Thus "The Age to Come and the Kingdom of God are sometimes interchangeable terms."

The attaining of "that age" is a blessing reserved for God's people and "will be inaugurated by the resurrection from the dead" (Lk. 20:35). Those who attain to that age will be immortal like the angels. "Resurrection life is therefore eternal life — the life of the Age to Come — the life of the Kingdom of God. Not only resurrection marks the transition from this age to the coming age; the parousia [Second Coming] of Christ will mark the close of this age" (Mt. 24:3; 24:30-31).

"In this eschatological dualism, Jesus and Paul shared the same world view that prevailed in Judaism. It is essentially the apocalyptic view of history." And although some scholars say this hope of the Kingdom of God on earth was not a true Hebrew prophetic hope, Ladd says that "the Old Testament prophetic hope of the coming of the Kingdom always involved a catastrophic inbreaking of God...Everything in the Gospels points to the idea that life in the Kingdom of God in the Age to Come will be life *on the earth*...(Mt. 19:28)" (emphasis added).

"Therefore, when Jesus proclaimed the coming of the Kingdom of God he did so against the background

of Hebrew-Jewish thought, which viewed men living in a situation dominated by sin, evil, and death, from which they needed to be rescued." "His proclamation of the Kingdom includes the hope, reaching back to the Old Testament prophets, that anticipates a new age in which all the evils of the present age will be purged by the act of God from human and earthly existence."

### The Spirit-World

Bringing in the Kingdom involved Jesus in a titanic struggle against Satan and his hosts of malignant demons (Mt. 4:1; Lk. 4:6). This idea also stems from the OT (Job 1-2; I Chron. 21:1). In Matthew 12:29 Jesus portrays himself as invading "the strong man's house" — this age — to despoil him.

"The doctrine of Satan and demons has several distinct theological implications. Evil is not imposed upon men directly by God, nor is evil blind chance or capricious fate. Evil has its roots in personality. Yet evil is greater than men. It can be resisted by the human will, although the human will can yield to it. Yet evil is not a disorganized, chaotic conflict of powers, as in animism, but is under the direction of a single will whose purpose it is to frustrate the will of God."

"This background of Satanic evil provides the cosmic background for the mission of Jesus and his proclamation of the Kingdom of God." Although science and philosophy may question the personal existence of Satan, "there is really no more difficulty in believing in the existence of a malevolent spirit behind the evils in human history than to believe in the existence of a good spirit — God. Our purpose is primarily to show that the theology of the Kingdom of God is essentially one of conflict and conquest over the kingdom of Satan."

"In Judaism, the destruction of Satanic powers was expected at the end of the age when the Kingdom of God should come." The demon in Mk. 1:24 recognizes a supernatural power in Jesus that is capable of crushing Satanic power here and now.

Demon possession manifested itself in various ways. Sometimes it was associated with afflictions of a physical nature (Mt. 9:32; 12:22), with epilepsy (Mt. 17:15, 18) and in only one place with mental illness (Mk. 5:15).

Ladd is quite clear in saying that it is not accurate simply to explain away demon possession and activity by saying it is an ancient interpretation for what we now know to be various forms of insanity. Frequently in the Synoptics demon possession is distinguished from other diseases. Jesus healed both the sick and those possessed by demons (Mk. 1:32). Demon possession is

distinguished from epilepsy and paralysis (Mt. 4:24) and from sickness and leprosy (Mt. 10:8).

Demon exorcism was one of Jesus' most frequent mission acts and "we cannot avoid the conclusion that Jesus' message of the coming of the Kingdom of God involved a fundamental struggle with and conquest of this spiritual realm of evil."

Nor is it accurate to say that Jesus appeared to adapt his belief in Satan to fit the ideas of his age. "The exorcism of demons was no mere peripheral activity in Jesus' ministry but was a manifestation of the essential purpose of the coming of the Kingdom of God into the evil age. We must recognize in the exorcism of demons a consciousness on the part of Jesus of engaging in an actual conflict with the spirit world, a conflict that lay at the heart of his messianic mission...The demonic is absolutely essential in understanding Jesus' interpretation of the picture of sin and of man's need for the Kingdom of God. Man is in bondage to a personal power stronger than himself. At the very heart of our Lord's mission is the need of rescuing men from bondage to the Satanic kingdom and of bringing them into the sphere of God's Kingdom. Anything less than this involves an essential reinterpretation of some of the basic facts of the gospel."

Although the history of the church's belief in demons and witches has been used by superstitious people to bring much evil and suffering, we must adhere still to Jesus' belief in a personal evil spirit world. "If for *a priori* rationalistic reasons we reject Jesus' belief in the existence of a realm of evil spiritual powers, it is difficult to see why Christ's belief in a personal God may not be eliminated also."

### **The Kingdom of God in Judaism**

The truly Hebraic, prophetic hope expects the Kingdom to arise out of history and to be ruled by a descendant of David in an earthly setting (Is. 9, 11). "They looked for an apocalyptic inbreaking of God in the person of a heavenly Son of Man with a completely transcendental Kingdom...(Dan. 7)." "It always involves an inbreaking of God into history when God's redemptive purpose is fully realized. The Kingdom is always an earthly hope...an earth redeemed from the curse of evil."

This future salvation means two things: deliverance from mortality, and perfected fellowship with God. Such eschatological salvation "includes the whole man." "The evils of physical weakness, sickness, and death will be swallowed up in the life of the Kingdom of God" (Mt. 25:34, 46). Therefore, "the

Kingdom of God stands as a comprehensive term for all that the messianic salvation included."

### **The Fatherly God**

In Christ, God is seeking men, inviting them to submit themselves to His reign that he might be their Father. In this eschatological salvation, the righteous will enter into the Kingdom of their Father (Mt. 13:43). "It is the Father who has prepared for the blessed this eschatological inheritance of the Kingdom (Mt. 25:34). It is the Father who will bestow upon Jesus' disciples the gift of the Kingdom (Lk. 12:32). The highest gift of God's Fatherhood is participation in God's sovereignty, which is to be exercised over all the world. In that day Jesus will enjoy a renewed fellowship with his disciples in the Father's Kingdom (Mt. 26:29). Clearly kingship and Fatherhood are closely related concepts (Mt. 6:9-10)." The future blessing of the Kingdom is dependent upon a present relationship. "Those who know God as their Father are those for whom the highest good in life is the Kingdom of God and its righteousness (Mt. 6:32, 33; Lk. 12:30)."

Jesus never applied the category of sonship to any but his disciples. Men became sons of God by recognizing his messianic sonship.

### **The Mystery of the Kingdom**

"Our central thesis is that the Kingdom of God is the redemptive reign of God dynamically active to establish His rule among men, and that this Kingdom, which will appear as an apocalyptic act at the end of the age, has already come into human history in the person and mission of Jesus to overcome evil, to deliver men from its power, and to bring them into the blessings of God's reign. The Kingdom of God involves two great moments: fulfillment within history, and consummation at the end of history [i.e. the end of the present age and the beginning of a new era of history — ed.]. It is precisely this background which provides the setting for the parables of the Kingdom."

The mystery of the Kingdom that Jesus alluded to "is the coming of the Kingdom into history in advance of its apocalyptic manifestation." "The new truth, now given to men by revelation in the person and mission of Jesus, is that the Kingdom that is to come finally in apocalyptic power, as foreseen in Daniel, has in fact entered into the world in advance in a hidden form to work secretly within and among men."

In Jesus' person and mission, the Kingdom has come, "but society is not uprooted" as Jewish Messianic belief held. Hence the parables of the sower, the tares, the leaven in the lump, the mustard seed, etc. Concerning the latter, the parable of the mustard seed illustrates the truth that the Kingdom which one day will

be a great tree, is already present in the world in a tiny, insignificant form.

Contemporary Jews could not understand how one could talk about the Kingdom apart from such an all-encompassing manifestation of God's rule. "How could the coming glorious Kingdom have anything to do with the poor little band of Jesus' disciples? Rejected by the religious leaders, welcomed by the tax collectors and sinners, Jesus looked more like a deluded dreamer than the bearer of the Kingdom of God. Hence, the parable of the leaven...the Kingdom of God, which one day will rule over all the earth, has entered the world in a form that is hardly perceptible. The leaven teaches that one day the eschatological Kingdom will prevail so that no rival sovereignty exists."

This was the mystery and the stumbling block to the Jews. Jesus' ministry initiated no such apocalyptic transformation. He preached the presence of the Kingdom of God, but the world went on as before. How then could this be the Kingdom? "The idea of the Kingdom of God conquering the world by a gradual permeation and inner transformation was utterly foreign to Jewish thought." What gives these parables their point is the fact that the Kingdom had come among men in an unexpected way, in a form that might easily be overlooked and despised. But contrary to every superficial evaluation, discipleship to Jesus means participation in the Kingdom of God. Present in the person and work of Jesus without outward or visible glory was the Kingdom of God itself.

The parable of the drag-net teaches that in Jesus' ministry the Kingdom has now come into the world without effecting this eschatological separation. Jesus teaches that one day the Kingdom will indeed create the perfect eschatological community. But before this event an unexpected manifestation of God's Kingdom has occurred.

### **The Faithful Remnant — The Church**

Jesus claimed to be the Messiah. His ministry and teaching "remained within the total context of Israel's faith and practice." His church stands in "direct continuity with the Old Testament Israel." "The true Israel [Gal. 6:16; Phil. 3:3] now finds its specific identity in its relationship to Jesus."

This explains why "for Christians of the first three centuries, the Kingdom was altogether eschatological [i.e., in the future]. Their Christian presence was a presence of tension." One of the main tasks of the church is to display in this present evil age the life and fellowship of the Age to Come. The church has a dual character, belonging to two ages. It

is the people of the Age to Come, but it still lives in this age, being constituted of sinful mortal men. This means that while the church in this age "will never attain perfection, it must nevertheless display the life of the perfect order, the eschatological Kingdom of God." The church then is not the Kingdom itself, as some theologians have maintained. The church witnesses to the Kingdom.

"The twelve are destined to be the head of the eschatological Israel...The twelve are destined to be the rulers of the eschatological Israel...(Mt. 19:28). To Peter and Christ's faithful community the keys of the Kingdom are delivered." The authority entrusted to Peter is grounded upon revelation, that is, spiritual knowledge, which he shared with the twelve. The keys of the Kingdom are therefore "the spiritual insight which will enable Peter to lead others in through the door of revelation through which he passed himself."

Today, the church is commissioned by Jesus to be his representatives. The final destiny of men will thus be decided by the way they react to the authentic message of the Kingdom as proclaimed by his agents in this present evil age. [See particularly Mark 4:11, 12, where repentance and forgiveness are conditioned on an intelligent reception of the Kingdom Gospel (Mt. 13:19).] "Through the proclamation of the gospel of the Kingdom in the world will be decided who will enter into the eschatological Kingdom and who will be excluded."✧

### **When the Real Jesus was Replaced by Another**

This magazine represents what scholars refer to as a **Socinian Christology**. This is merely technical language (and we should not be afraid of it) to describe the understanding of those who maintain that Jesus, the unique Son of God, began to exist in the womb of his mother. Socinians take their name from the time of the Reformation in the 1500s when much investigation of the biblical view of Jesus was undertaken by scholars and other Bible students, in various parts of the world. The Italian uncle and nephew, Laelius (1525-62) and Faustus Socinus (1539-1604) adopted an anti-Trinitarian view of Jesus. They denied that the Bible presents Jesus as an eternal spirit being arriving on earth from an eternal preexistence as God or a god. Rather they argued that Luke 1:35 and Matthew 1:18, 20, and the whole Old Testament expectation of the Messiah, describe a Jesus, Son of God, who is *to arise within the human family* and begin his existence from the time of his conception. In the case of Jesus of course, they recognized a unique

begetting by the Father who, by miracle, and with a direct parallel to the creation of Adam, and without the intervention of a human father, caused the *genesis* of the Son of God.

The issue of the so-called “pre-human” existence of Jesus continues to divide Bible students very sharply. The majority view is that the Son of God was “eternally begotten by the Father,” that is, he had no beginning, but was always the Son of God, uncreated, though begotten (the Trinitarian view). For many others this is simply a meaningless concept. One cannot be “begotten” and yet have no *beginning* of existence. To be “begotten,” as the Bible describes Jesus (I John 5:18, not KJV; John 3:16, etc.), means that one is a created person with a definite beginning to one’s life.

Those students of the Bible who do not accept a “beginningless beginning,” that is “eternal begetting” of the Son of God are not agreed as to the moment in history at which the Son began to exist. Jehovah’s Witnesses are convinced that the Son was begotten sometime before Genesis 1, and that the Son is in fact the same personage as Michael the Archangel. Socinians, on the other hand, believe that Jesus was never an angel (see Heb. ch. 1). As Messiah he is a descendant of Eve and of Abraham and David and must therefore originate in the human biological chain. (The issue of preexistence, whether Jesus did or did not literally pre-date his begetting in the womb of Mary, will be the subject of a debate between myself, Anthony Buzzard, and a Jehovah’s Witness scholar, Greg Stafford. The discussion will be held in Wenatchee, Washington at the Church of God Abrahamic Faith, co-pastored by Kirby Davis (509-663-1025) and Merry Peterson (509-662-3865), email: [Merrysparrow@juno.com](mailto:Merrysparrow@juno.com). The debate will be Sat., Oct. 23 and all are welcome. Free admission.)

Our Socinian view maintains that from the second century churchgoers became confused about the origin of Jesus, whether it was in *time* at his birth, in eternity, or in pre-history before Genesis.

A person who has preexisted himself is, we think, impossible to describe. If Jesus was Michael transformed into a man, who really was Jesus? Was he 100% Michael and 100% Jesus? Did Michael and Jesus coexist in the same person? If so, who exactly came into existence as the Son of God? If that Son was already alive before his own conception, what or who was conceived and began to exist in his mother’s womb? Did Michael cease to exist as an angel before or after he reduced himself to a human sperm? How can you “be” before you “are”?

Einstein, we think, was right when he declared that the principles of the universe are essentially beautiful and simple. The Bible demonstrates the same simplicity. The question of the origin of the Son of God in the debates of the early Christian centuries is a nightmare of complexity. The whole issue turned into a fierce war of words, heavily dependent on terminology drawn from Greek philosophy. Losing the simplicity of the Socinian position, the competing parties — led by Arius and Athanasius — argued as to whether Jesus was God or a god in heaven before he was metamorphosed (?) from angel or God Himself to human person.

John simply says that the word or mind or plan of God became a human person (John 1:14). The Son in other words did not exist until his *genesis* in Mary. Note the Greek word in Matthew 1:18 — *genesis* — suggesting the parallel with the book of Genesis and Adam (son of God, Luke 3:38). And note how translations slightly veil the significance of Matthew 1:20, which reads: “that which is *begotten* in her is from holy spirit.” The word here does not mean “conceived” (the part of the mother) but “begotten,” in this case the supernatural activity of the Father. That marvelous and miraculous act of God overshadowing Mary *brought into existence* the Son of God. Jesus alone of all men could say “God is my father,” by which he meant not the sonship shared by all believers when they are “born again” by receiving the “seed” which is the Gospel of the Kingdom (I Pet. 1:23; Luke 8:11), but an unprecedented Sonship originating in his mother’s womb.

How did this unfortunate loss of the simplicity of the creation or procreation of the Son of God occur? Luke had truthfully reported the direct causal link between the supernatural generation of Jesus and his right thus to be the Son of God (Luke 1:35: “*for that reason* the one begotten will be called the Son of God”).

The “prince of Church historians,” Adolf Harnack, in his massive account of the *History of Dogma* (4<sup>th</sup> and final edition, 1909), accurately describes the struggle which began in the second century over who Jesus is and was. It was, he maintains, a struggle between theologians. And it was the struggle, too, “of Stoic Platonism [the philosophies of the first century] for supremacy in the theology of the Church.” It was in fact “the history of the *displacement* of the historical Jesus by a pre-human, preexisting Jesus — the real Jesus by an imaginary Jesus — in dogmatic theology. More precisely it was the victorious effort to get rid of the difficulties which the earliest speculations about God and Christ had already created. But this was attempted not by a return [i.e., to original truth] but by a further

speculative advance, which finally weakened pure monotheism by splitting it [i.e., between God and Jesus], and made Jesus unrecognizable by ‘making him double’” (Vol. 1, Bk. 2, p. 704).

The NT Jesus was replaced by a curious “double-person,” fully God and at the same time fully man. Mortal, yet immortal. Temptable and yet, as God, not temptable. Preexisting and yet coming into existence. Older than himself? While being God, he did not know what God knew. All this left the churches floundering in a morass of unanswerable puzzles and conundrums. Belief in the One God, Jesus’ own creed (Mark 12:28ff), was submerged in complex philosophical terminology. The witness of the NT is a blessed relief from those awful centuries of theological polemics, infightings, excommunications, banishments and murder. ✧

## Comments

“In my prolonged search for Truth I purchased the book *The Doctrine of the Trinity: Christianity’s Self-Inflicted Wound* by Buzzard and Charles Hunting. I found it most interesting and thought-provoking.” — *Wisconsin*

“I learnt from my mom that there exists one God and that that one God had given His only Son to die for us. Later on I did a DTS (Disciple Training School with YWAM). There I learnt that Jesus is God. I was on the streets of London and told Muslim people that Jesus is God! How terrible. I did not know better...To be honest, I did not spend too many thoughts on that matter. But still, all my life, God the Father was always the ‘boss.’ I never thought of Jesus as being the ‘same God as God the Father.’

“About a year ago, a friend drew my attention to ‘the dogma of the Trinity.’ So I started to investigate. Reading books, searching the web. That friend also told me to read your book. (I ordered it in German from Werner Bartl in Austria.) Later on, another friend gave me two more of your books which I now give to other people to read. Reading your book was like: ‘the fog has gone, a new, clear day has come!’

“And after all that, nothing was the same in my life! I was going to a charismatic church. Now they have kicked me out of it, because they say that I believe a false doctrine. They say that my belief is nearer to what the Jehovah’s Witnesses believe than what the word of God says! I had never thought that this could happen to me. But still: I am so grateful to the Lord, that he has shown me the truth. And I am grateful to you, that you have written such a wonderful book. Reading the Bible now is so much easier! My mother, my sister and my aunt have read your book and they say the same! I do hope that many more people will read it and also question the Trinity.” — *Switzerland*

“I have read several of your articles that I found on your website at [restorationfellowship.org](http://restorationfellowship.org). I must say I am ‘caught’ by the way you defend and explain true Christianity and stick to the teachings of our Lord Jesus. There are lots of misinterpretations these days, just among those who claim that they are Christians, but I am convinced that our Father will protect the ‘Way’ for those who follow the lamb and restore true worship through his holy spirit... I have been a Jehovah’s Witness for about 19 years...I began to have doubts about some of the core teachings of the Watchtower theology.

“Since the experience of my ‘sonship’ so many things are now easier to understand. I gained back a close and intense relationship with God. One of the things which made me feel uneasy and uncomfortable was the way I was taught to look at Jesus and his relationship with the Father, in regard to his so-called preexistence. I now know that this is a philosophic view, and I reject it because I am convinced that God’s word is free from human philosophy. We should do everything we can to avoid such philosophical views. Paul made this clear to us in one of his letters. Finding your site and some others has been inspiring and has given me the feeling that everything is going to come out all right.” — *The Netherlands*

## 14<sup>th</sup> Theological Conference

Please do plan on attending our next Theological Conference. The dates are Friday, April 29 - Sunday, May 1, 2005. This is an international gathering of enthusiastic Bible students and truth-seekers coming together from many different backgrounds for mutual edification and encouragement. The nature of the conference as a “theological conference” definitely does not mean that it is a heavy “academic” exercise. Papers on important biblical topics are presented, there is opportunity for interaction with the speakers, and there is much scope for enjoying shorter “faith stories” from other participants. The event is held near Atlanta in a comfortable setting with easy access to the airport. The Georgia spring weather is known by all to be an experience not to be missed.

## Intensive Class Offered

Atlanta Bible College will offer a three-day intensive course, “The Kingdom of God as Gospel,” to be taught by Anthony May 2-4, 2005 following the Theological Conference. The classes will be held at Cornerstone Bible Church, the same location as the Theological Conference. Times will be 9.00-12.30 and 1.30-5.00 Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. Tuition \$238 for credit, otherwise \$185, plus textbook.