

# Focus on the Kingdom

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Anthony Buzzard, editor

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## Biblical Realism in Relation to Israel

by Bill Wachtel

In so-called “replacement theology,” which is very widespread, *literal*, ethnic Israel is no longer in view as God’s covenant people, but rather the Church has fully and permanently replaced Israel. The Old Testament promises of restoration for Israel are *reinterpreted* by this theology so as to make the Church the recipient of all the blessings, while national Israel is left to receive God’s curses.

Historically, the Catholic Church adopted this theology and made it popular. The Protestant reformer John Calvin perpetuated it among his own followers, and it is accepted today by many so-called “evangelicals” as well as (surprisingly!) Jehovah’s Witnesses (contrary to the views of their own founder, C.T. Russell).

This replacement theology stands invalidated by Romans 11 (and a mass of OT prophecy), where “Israel” means literal Israel and where Paul tells us that God still has plans for them as a nation (vv. 22-32) because they are “beloved for the fathers’ sakes” (v. 28). The medieval Church adopted a method of “interpreting” Bible prophecies “allegorically.” This allegorism continues in much of the professing church today. Allegory means “saying something other.” It is a spiritual poison, because it nullifies the text of Scripture in the name of “interpretation.” (A very occasional allegory in the Bible is so labeled, Gal 4:24)

Long ago, people of Abrahamic faith realized that this method was untrue to Scripture and was destructive to belief in the Gospel of the Kingdom. The Gospel of the Kingdom includes vital information about the *now* hardened Israel (not the Church) who are “enemies of the Gospel” (Rom. 11:28). But collectively, in the future, they are going to turn to the Messiah. Meanwhile individual Jews can of course join the followers of Jesus the Messiah and become members of the spiritual “circumcision” (Phil. 3:3).

Insisting on a biblical future for national Israel does not mean that we as Christians are supposed to be active *politically* to bring about whatever agenda we think the Bible supports. We believe the Church is not called to such activity but rather to be separate

from the governments of this age. For this reason we do not vote nor bear arms.

Some speak of the “God of the Jews and the God of the Muslims” in such a way as to suggest that this is the same God. We object to such an identification. The God of the Jews, Yahweh, is the true God of the universe. He is the God and Father of the Lord Jesus. He is not Allah, the “god” of Islam. The Koran and the Bible are vastly different. The biblical God calls Himself the God of Israel. False interpretations of the Bible are also capable of leading people away from the God who inspired this precious Book.

Though we believe in the restoration of national Israel, this does not mean that we see the *current* government of Israel as the Kingdom of God. We do not believe that Zionism is the fulfillment of the biblical picture of Israel *regathered in faith*. We do not think that the Israelis do not make serious mistakes, as we all do. Israel has not yet been converted to the Christian Gospel of salvation, nor to the ethic of the New Testament. Paul calls them “enemies of the Gospel” (Rom. 11:28). They are a worldly government just like all other current governments. They have been brought back to their historic homeland in unbelief, just as our forefathers in the Abrahamic faith envisioned. But they needed to be there in their unbelief in order for God to deal with them in that land, just as His prophets foretold. In the future a collective national repentance and turning to the Messiah is to be expected. “Thus all Israel will be saved” (Rom. 11:26). Micah’s comment fits well: “I will surely gather all of you, Jacob; I will gather the *remnant* of Israel” (Mic. 2:12). Israel as a whole will be finally converted. This does not mean every Jew, just because he is a Jew. Everyone must choose to repent and accept Jesus and his Gospel. The Bible contains no doctrine of inevitable, irresistible salvation, much less of double predestination. Every man must make a choice, and happily God wants everyone to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4). ✧

## A Response to a Commentary on the Book of Hebrews

by **Anne Mbeke** (Anne is from Kenya and a student at Atlanta Bible College)

“The central theme in Hebrews is the importance of listening to the voice of God in Scripture and the art of Christian preaching. The opening lines of the homily focus on the God who speaks. The characterization of God as the one who intervened in Israel’s history through the spoken word serves to introduce the characterization of the Son as the one through whom God has spoken the ultimate word (1:1-2a). The theme is sustained with variations throughout the homily (2:1-4; 3:7b; 4:13; 5:11; 10:23, 35-39; 11:11). It is recapitulated in a climactic warning: ‘Be careful that you do not disregard the one *who is speaking*’ (12:25a). The redemptive accomplishment and the transcendent dignity of the Son through whom God has spoken the final word demonstrates that it will be a catastrophe to ignore the *word of salvation delivered through the Son*” (William Lane, *Word Bible Commentary*).

The above commentary gives a very clear picture of what the writer of Hebrews intended to convey to his readers. The fact that he begins by establishing who Jesus is in relation to God, mankind and even angels must not be ignored. He brings out the fact that Jesus Christ is superior to all the other agents whom God used in the past to speak to His people. He also makes it very clear that Jesus is the *Son* of God who, like mankind, suffered death, but because he “learned obedience” (Heb. 5:8) and did the will of the Father (preached the gospel of the Kingdom for which he was sent, Luke 4:43), he was raised from the dead and elevated to the highest position of power and authority — at the right-hand of the Father.

Having established this unique and powerful position of God’s Son, the writer of Hebrews emphasizes the word of God (the Gospel) as the basis for God’s relationship with mankind. God (Yahweh) spoke to the Israelites in varied ways, and through different persons or envoys — the prophets and angels. The Hebrews writer contrasts this with the way in which God has spoken in the recent past — through His Son Jesus Christ. The word of God, the Gospel, is therefore extremely important — in fact it is the *only* way in which a relationship with God can be established, sustained and eventually consummated in the future “rest” which, according to the writer, is the promised hope for all who believe God’s Gospel/word.

When Christ spoke, he insisted always that what he *said* was very important and crucial for all who wanted to “see” the Father, that is, understand the Father’s great immortality program summarized as the Gospel of the Kingdom. He repeatedly said that these words were not his, but God’s. Moses was given a glimpse of this when he spoke prophetically about the prophet like himself in whose mouth Yahweh would put His words (Deut. 18:15-19). He emphasizes over and over again the gravity of refusing to listen to this prophet Jesus, because God would deal with anyone who does not listen to him! (Deut. 18:19; see Acts 3:22, 23).

When Jesus started to preach the Kingdom Gospel given to him by God, he urged his listeners to pay close attention (“Hear!” and be careful that they do not lose the word — see the parable of the sower in Luke 8:8b). The Hebrew writer, quoting from Psalm 95, repeatedly warns us, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts” (Heb. 3:15; 4:7). Why? Because there is no way of escape for the disobedient and hard-hearted. This is the perennial message of the Bible. And the only way to obey is first to hear the word (Gospel) which, as the Hebrew writer reminds us, was originally announced and preached by Jesus Christ himself (Heb. 2:3). The term “today” used in this Psalm means not just the “now” of the next 24 hours, but it implies the “now” of the present age. Our response is critical for our future inheritance of the Kingdom, that is, being saved when the Kingdom comes. Rejecting the Gospel-word spoken by Christ today will mean that such a person does not enter the “rest” of the coming Kingdom age.

Having established the superiority of Christ over Moses, Joshua and angels, the writer goes on to say that it would be much more catastrophic today to reject the Gospel/word preached by Jesus, if the words spoken earlier even by angels were ignored with terrible consequences — death in the desert, failure to enter the promised land. The word was “not profitable” to them because *they did not believe*. But for the people of the New Covenant which Jesus sealed and put into force with his own blood, the consequences of unbelief/disobedience are much worse, since this will mean being excluded and shut off from the Kingdom which God has prepared for those who obey His word as delivered by His Son Jesus.

My reaction to the above commentary by way of conclusion would be that the people of God are those who hear (believe and obey) God’s Gospel-word as announced to mankind by the historical and risen Jesus Christ. Jesus’ words are life — literally as a foretaste of the coming kingdom age (Heb. 6), and as the promised

hope of the age when all the heroes of faith — some of whom are listed in Hebrews 11 — together with all the people of God through the new, better and superior covenant mediated by Christ, will receive the promised Kingdom. Edward Fudge says of the writer of the book of Hebrews that “his readers are to hold to the things which they have heard from the Son by means of his apostles”<sup>1</sup>; otherwise the consequences will be dire, and I couldn’t agree more! Of course the Apostles were faithfully relaying the very words of Jesus when he preached in Israel before his crucifixion. On no account must Jesus and the Gospel of salvation be divorced from the words of Jesus. But just such an error plagues modern preaching which speaks as though it is *only* the death of Jesus which counts! ✧

## Correction, and Further Thoughts about the Resurrection of Jesus

In the January *Focus* I had written: “The testimony of the Apostles to the resurrection of Jesus deserves our full confidence in its truth. There is every reason to believe them. They saw Jesus die.” A careful reader of *Focus on the Kingdom* kindly pointed out that I was wrong to say that the Apostles (plural) watched him die. In fact only John actually saw the death of Jesus happen (John 19:27). He is right, and we will see that the error is rectified. One might, I suppose, add that the other disciples knew what was going to happen and it was not long before the report of Jesus’ death came to them. But they were not all eyewitnesses of his crucifixion.

And our observant reader is also right to say that the Apostles did not see Jesus buried. However, the women did, and being faithful Christians and knowing that lying is a sin, their witness is secure and accurate. I accept their testimony. They would certainly have reported what they saw to the Apostles: “Now the women who had come with him out of Galilee followed, and saw the tomb and how his body was laid” (Luke 23:55).

I have not the slightest reason to imagine that these women were confused in any way. The gospels claim to give us direct eyewitness reporting that Jesus was buried after being torturously murdered by Jewish and Roman officials. It would have become common

knowledge to the whole of Jesus’ circle if the story of his death and burial had been fabricated.

Moreover, the *empty* tomb was seen by the Apostles. Luke 24:12: “But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings only; and he went away to his home, marveling at what had happened.” Later he met the risen Christ.

We now rehearse this amazing account of the return to life of a dead person. John 20:8-22: “So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb then also entered, and he saw *and believed*. For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. So the disciples went away again to their own homes. But Mary was standing outside the tomb weeping; and so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been lying. And they said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping?’ She said to them, ‘Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.’ When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?’ Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, ‘Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Mary!’ She turned and said to him in Hebrew, ‘Rabboni!’ (which means teacher).

“Jesus said to her, ‘Stop clinging to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brethren and say to them, “I ascend to my Father and your Father, and my God and your God.”’” Mary Magdalene came, announcing to the disciples, ‘I have seen the Lord,’ and that he had said these things to her.

“So when it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’

“And when he had said this, he showed them both his hands and his side. The disciples then rejoiced when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you; as the Father has sent me, I also send you.’ And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive holy spirit.’”

How does a skeptic avoid what is designed to be a clear report of historical facts? It is claimed by some that the disciples were *not* writing history. Perrin is quoted as follows to suggest this idea:

<sup>1</sup> Edward Fudge, *Our Man in Heaven*, C.E.I. Publishing Company, 1973, p. 35.

“The resurrection narratives are, in other words, literary expressions of the evangelists’ understanding of what it means to say ‘Jesus is risen!’ They are narrative expressions of a distinct theological viewpoint.”<sup>2</sup> The skeptic argues this way: “Many believers read the text literally. Is it possible the narratives were meant to be understood figuratively?” My response to that question is that there is no evidence in the text of our Greek manuscripts that the writers had ceased to write history! One might ask, How do you know that the *whole* narrative of the New Testament gospels is not “theological” history, i.e., “theology” dressed up as history, but not really history? How do you know that Jesus himself has not been invented and presented as a historical person for the sake of an agenda thought up by the New Testament writers?

The answer is that the narratives read as historical accounts. There are Pharisees who encounter Jesus, and no one thinks the Pharisees are invented. We have good evidence of what Pharisees believed even from outside the Bible. We know they existed. There are geographical places which we know to be real locations. The gospels read as a plain record of events which happened.

When it comes to the accounts of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, what makes any reader suppose that *suddenly*, without warning or any change of style, historical narrative has been abandoned? Is the statement that the women came to the tomb just “theology” and not history? What about the women seeing where Jesus was buried? Just a good story, but not meant to be taken literally?

The texts read seamlessly. There is no indication at all that the writers wanted to be understood figuratively! That they invented a good story to make a theological point.

Sometimes the virginal birth is presented by opponents of the New Testament as an example of “theology” misunderstood as history. It is claimed that Luke was just writing poetically and imaginatively. But Luke’s intention was nothing like that, as he assures us in his opening verses (Luke 1:1-4). He is a reporter, rather, of hard facts.

Again I ask, Does Luke, describing the beginning of the Son of God, give the slightest hint that he is moving from history (Zechariah, the course of Abijah, Elizabeth, Mary and Joseph, etc.) to a piece of fiction — to make a point about the importance of Jesus?

There is no such indication. Luke is speaking about the Messiah, and he knows from Hebrew Scripture about the Messiah as heir to the throne of David (Luke 1:32, 33). He also knew that the Messianic Psalm 2 had spoken of God being the Father of the Messiah: “You are My Son; today I have begotten you.” He knew the LXX version of Psalm 110:3 which reads, “Before the dawn *from the womb* I have *begotten* you.” He knew of “the servant” who was to be formed by God in the womb (Isa. 49:5). The Messiah was to be divinely generated. Is it not the most natural thing for someone reading those texts as prophecy from the inspired Hebrew Bible to report their historical fulfillment in the case of Jesus?

Gabriel understood this well: “The holy one *begotten* will be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35).

Matthew was in agreement describing the “genesis” of Jesus (Matt. 1:18). The angels assured Joseph, “What is *begotten* [often mistranslated as just ‘conceived’ which diverts us from the creative activity of God] in her is from the holy spirit,” God’s operational presence and creative power (Matt. 1:20).

Luke gives us history as proof of the truth of the Hebrew Bible. What is so objectionable about that? The Son of God is indeed entitled to be so called, because of the *begetting* effected by God himself (Luke 1:35). Luke appeals also to the explanation of the angel: “For this reason precisely [the virginal miracle], the holy one to be *begotten* will be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35). This is merely the fulfillment of the oracles of Psalm 2:7, 110:3. It is also the fulfillment, precisely, of the centrally important promise to David that *God* would in the future be the Father of David’s descendant the Messiah (2 Sam. 7:14). Paul spoke of this central fact when he said that the Son of God “came into existence [*genomenos*] from David by human lineage” (Rom. 1:3). He adds that the same Son was declared to be so *in power* at the resurrection (Rom. 1:4). But of course he did not *begin* to be Son only at the resurrection.

The writer to the Hebrews very tellingly combines 2 Samuel 7:14 with Psalm 2:7 to show how Jesus the Son of God originated (Heb. 1:5), and Paul used Psalm 2:7 (“Today I have begotten you”) to describe Jesus’ coming on to the scene of history, i.e. being “raised up” (Acts 13:33). Acts 13:34 speaks by contrast of the resurrection of Jesus, being raised up *from the dead*. (Note how some translations improperly added the word “again” in verse 33.)

Combining his evidence from the Old Testament, Luke reports its perfect fulfillment in the historical event of the virginal begetting of Jesus. Thus if Luke

<sup>2</sup> *The Resurrection Narratives*, 1977, p. 7.

believed that Holy Scripture (which Jesus also affirmed — Luke 24:44; John 10:35) had long before announced the supernatural creation/begetting/bringing into existence of the Messiah, he is merely recounting the historical fulfillment of that prophecy. He has the weight of the Hebrew Bible behind him as well as the confirming evidence of Gabriel and presumably Mary with whom he could have conversed.

There is nothing at all to suggest that either the prophecy or its coming to pass were meant figuratively. Luke the historian is dealing with facts. Luke certainly did not intend to describe anything other than a physical miracle of the beginning of Jesus. He is the Son of God *for the very reason* that God created/begat him (Luke 1:35), as had been prophesied in the Psalms and in the Davidic covenant.

Matthew in his opening chapter goes to the trouble of giving us a whole genealogical line back to Abraham. He wants us to know about the *genesis* or origin of Jesus (Matt. 1:1, 18, 20). Just figurative language? Hardly. I think we all know that genealogical tables are not meant to be taken figuratively! Was the central promise that the Messiah was to be descended from David meant to be taken *non-literally*? Jews never thought so, and nor should we. Was the promise of resurrection in Daniel 12:2 meant as a figure of speech? Definitely not. What comfort is there in figures of speech when it comes to overcoming death and living forever?

And if God could create the first Adam, evidence of which we see in all the following “adams” around us, could He not create a second Adam using the human biological chain? And could He not bring that same “second Adam” back to life after evil men killed him for telling the Truth?

I find Perrin’s suggestion nonsensical that these narratives and those of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus could possibly be meant figuratively. Or perhaps part figuratively and part literally? What exactly are we being asked to believe? That the death and burial of Jesus were *literal* events in history, but that his resurrection was just a good piece of fiction to make a “theological” point? That strikes me as unreasonable in the extreme. No responsible writer intent on getting his point over clearly is going to confuse his audience by switching, without any indication of his intention, from fact to fiction, from history to poetry!

This of course is not to mention the heroic witness of the original Apostles and of Paul to Jesus being alive. Peter, Paul and James suffered miserably for

their conviction that Jesus was alive and immortal. On this pivotal fact Paul based his entire career. And on it the whole of our faith relies.

And it is the Hebrew Bible which announces all this in reference to the Messiah, and New Covenant Scripture shows how it all became true in history. It was the Hebrew Bible which declared the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus in advance (1 Cor. 15:3, 4). If the New Testament testimony to the fulfillment of these events is impugned, then so is the authority of the Hebrew Scriptures which the New Testament confirms.

One of our readers who is following the argument in detail assures me that the writers of the New Testament were not *deliberately* lying. He suggests that perhaps the entire resurrection account is an attempt by Satan to deceive mankind. My view is that Satan desperately wants to deprive mankind of the hope of resurrection, demonstrated in history in the case of Jesus, and thus filling us with hope that we too can gain indestructible life by future resurrection from death.

My skeptical friend, who has most kindly provided me with much rare and valuable biblical unitarian literature and who wants to be fair to the Christian point of view, is convinced that the New Testament writers *did not intend* what they wrote about the resurrection to be taken literally. “Perhaps they used the common literary device of ‘legend’ (embellishment) and ‘myth’ to teach truths via non-historical events and non-literal means.” I think that is impossible. And so do literary experts like J.B. Phillips and many others. Is it really credible that Luke who so obviously set out to collect facts, “things which have happened” (Luke 1:1), was so hopelessly muddled and inept that he then proceeded to produce poetry or imaginative fiction, which we are stupid enough to take literally?

Listen to Luke (1:1-4) and see if he intended to be taken as a narrator of hard fact: “Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught.”

I have to reject that suggestion that Luke could have switched without warning into flights of fancy and poetry. That he really did not think Jesus had returned from death literally. I have read Luke and the other writings in the original for years. I have been through them verse by verse in a classroom setting for years.

There is a limit to what is credible. I find no basis for supposing that Luke meant us to understand that when he reported, via Peter, that “we ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead” (Acts 10:41) that this is *non-literal language*. If it is, then language has no way of communicating anything with certainty.

I appreciate my critic. He very generously ends by saying, “You are still my favorite biblical unitarian, and I will continue to send you information I think you and your readership will value.”

For this I am deeply grateful. But this I insist on: The Luke I read was not composing theological “mythical” material. The issues for him were far too important to abandon facts which ordinary folk will continue to read as good history — and inspiring history as well as excellent theology. God after all must be allowed to work in history, the history of the world He planned and created. The falsehood to be avoided is that God is not interested in history! He is in fact the *author* of history and He made man with the intention of conferring immortality on him via resurrection. The Jesus events are the proof of God’s marvelous intentions. ✧

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

We want to extend a warm invitation to you to be with us April 21-23, 2006. I think this is going to be a wonderful conference. Greg Deuble from Australia will be with us and “armed” with his brand new book which is really a blockbuster event for the Abrahamic faith. We plan to allow a little more time for fellowship this year.

This is a unique gathering of Abrahamic believers, bringing people together from various countries. A number of speakers will present papers on subjects of interest to us all, with time for questions following. The conference is a rich time of fellowship and an opportunity to meet and encourage others of Abrahamic persuasion. There will be opportunities, as usual, for shorter faith story presentations. This is not an academic occasion, for specialists only! It is a meeting for Christian education and fellowship to further the great truths of Scripture. Many of the participants have newly discovered the Abrahamic faith and are excited to meet others of similar persuasion.

The cost of the conference is \$105 if you register by April 7, and \$130 after April 7. Please register by phoning Atlanta Bible College at 800-347-4261 or 404-362-0052, or use the form on the back page. Rooms are \$75 per night at the Hampton Inn in

McDonough, Georgia and you can make reservations by phoning them at 770-914-0077. Please plan on arriving on Thursday and the conference will begin at 9:00 am on Friday, April 21st. The hotel rate includes a continental breakfast. Transportation from Atlanta Airport to the hotel and to the meeting place at Cornerstone Bible Church in McDonough will be provided.

The weather is normally gorgeous in Georgia in April. Please do consider joining us. It is so important for us all to gather from time to time to celebrate our common faith.

### “The True Messiah” Intensive Course

Following the conference on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday (April 24-26), I will conduct a class sponsored by Atlanta Bible College. The course can be taken for credit if you are working on a degree with Atlanta Bible College (which is accredited). But we invite anyone to audit the course for \$129 (including textbook). Three full days of instruction. Last year about 12 gathered to explore the Kingdom of God as Gospel. This year we want to tackle the issue of Christology. Amazing things are happening in the world of theology worldwide and this is going to have an impact on us and our circle of friends. We want to strengthen and preserve the precious truth about the One God and His uniquely begotten Son. Further questions can be addressed to the college at 800-347-4261. If you do plan to stay on for these extra days, please make arrangements with the Hampton Inn, unless you choose another place to stay.

### Course Concept, Description and Objective

A flood of literature continues to pour from the presses on the subject of the identity of Jesus. The so-called quest for the historical Jesus is probably the topic which most engages the minds of professional scholars and many laymen, especially those who are uneasy with the uncritical acceptance of church tradition about Jesus and his claims.

In view of the central question asked by Jesus about “Who do you say that I am?” and the Savior’s promise to found his own Church on the right answer to that question, this course examines the identity of Jesus as the promised Messiah of Israel and the world. We will cover the basic materials on “Christology” beginning with the Hebrew Bible’s anticipation of the “one to come” and his arrival in Bethlehem. From Genesis onwards and through the prophets of Israel, and the Psalms, there is a rich and varied body of texts dedicated to defining the Messiah and his mission, his aims and claims. Stress will be laid on the fact that Jesus affirmed the creed of Israel (1 Cor. 8:4-6). In the

New Testament we will examine the development of the Messiah's career and identity, concentrating first on Matthew and Luke's account of the Savior's origin by virginal begetting. We will then peruse the Gospel of John for the portrait of Jesus as Messiah presented by John, the beloved disciple. So-called difficult texts in John will receive special attention. Since Paul has been the subject of so much controversy we will analyze the principal Christological sections of his epistles and show their complete consistency with the Old Testament and the other New Testament writings. A main objective will be to underline the Christology of the radical reformers, and current "Abrahamic" believers, who challenge the notion that Jesus claimed to be the second member of an eternal Triune Godhead. We will refer to significant current literature from Protestant and Roman Catholic sources, which is very much in agreement with the Abrahamic Christology held by that denomination since the 1850s. This is a new and exciting development and points to the possibility of a revolution in thinking about Jesus, with enormous implications for the major religions, Christianity, Judaism and Islam. A major aim is to equip participants with the tools and skills to share the information with others. This is not a purely "academic" exercise, but rather designed to promote evangelism and a return to the biblical Jesus and his Message as Messiah. ✧

## Comments

"Just wanted to write and tell you how much I am enjoying your website. Super articles. Only two days of researching this site and its articles has helped me put my Christian faith back into the right perspective. I somehow got off track for over a year, when I began to take Trinitarianism back into my bosom. The last obstacle in finally putting away this 'unbiblical theory' was the 'preexistence of the Son' issue. Your articles 'John 3:13' and 'Testing for Truth: A Critical Question about Your Creed' were very beneficial in helping me burn the last bridge that stood in the way of my liberation from Trinitarianism. Also, your book *The Doctrine of the Trinity: Christianity's Self-inflicted Wound* (which I have owned for years) is being very helpful in putting Jesus back to being the Son of God vs. God the Son." — *from email*

"I recently found your ministry online. I have been searching for like-minded believers. It has been hard to find fellowship because of my belief in One God (the Father). I grew up a Trinitarian all my life, went to a Trinitarian Bible school and served in a large church as a Trinitarian minister for a couple of years

until I found these truths about 14 months ago." — *Arkansas*

"I have been thinking a lot about what you teach about Jesus. I am not sure about it, but one thing, it certainly would make Jesus absolutely the second Adam. Adam did not exist before his creation. Although I don't say I am sure about what you teach it will take me some time to 'make sure of all things.' I like your simplicity. I believe the Bible's words as they are written and fear any 'interpretation.' If I don't understand something, I pray about it and leave it alone. Later, sometimes even years later, I will be reading and suddenly I will remember something that was incomprehensible, and it appears like a beautiful flower, a truth radiant like a rainbow. I have learned to 'wait on the Lord.' I have been told by religious leaders that I am blind. I honestly did try to accept the teaching of some of them after I left the Witnesses, but would end up suddenly exploding over it, not able to accept it. So now I never accept anything until it is proven to me by the whole Bible. I continue to see the personality of Abba Father in the Scriptures and in the works of creation, which I study with great pleasure, and to pray to be filled more and more with the Holy Spirit and to overcome sin by the power of Christ...I know absolutely for certain, rock-solid in my heart that I belong to Christ. He has confirmed it over and over again to me by the Holy Spirit. The thing which has tortured me since this confirmation first came to me in 1974 has been the religious leaders all telling me that I do not in fact belong to Him; I am apostate. To every church, I am apostate, heretic. But every time one of them condemns me, and their condemnation does affect me so that I prayerfully examine myself with the Word. Once you taste God, then you are hooked and no man's words taste the same. I tell others now that God will teach them through the Scriptures if they pray for the Spirit of Truth. — *from email*

"We are delighted with what we are learning. It has opened a whole new interest for us. We had been in the doldrums for so long since leaving the JW's and now we have real hope for the future again. Jesus said, 'Seek and you will find.' At last we have found what we were looking for." — *Australia*

"It is a wonderful opportunity and privilege to have learned about you and your sustained effort at spreading the word of hope to all the nooks and crannies of this world. I am a legal practitioner working for the Federal Ministry of Justice, though visually handicapped, and am very interested in your Kingdom programs. Please pray for me. Your prayers will make all the difference in my life." — *Nigeria*