

Focus on the Kingdom

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Our Ninth Year

We begin our ninth year of publication with this issue. We are grateful to God and to the Messiah for allowing this monthly venture to go out free, and to those of you who have so generously supported us. A small team of workers makes this publication possible. Lots of our own continuous reading in the Bible, commentary, professional theological journals in various languages, and current affairs contributes to the “food” we offer for your digestion. We are hopeful that it represents something at least very close to the faith of first-century Christians.

If there is a major lesson we have learned over the years it is that “the cult” experience from which many of our readers have emerged kept us ignorant! We were told that all scholars were “fools.” This was a clever device to prevent us from successful Bible study. We have gained, by wide reading, “a multitude of counsel.” That is always a wise policy. Nothing is more dangerous than the perception that God has dropped into our midst some “apostle” who, without training, gets his theology straight simply because as an “apostle” he can bypass the ordinary channels of research and peer review which the rest of us must undergo.

The One God of Jesus and Israel, and the New Covenant

Those early New Testament believers in the One God of Israel, in Jesus as the Messiah and the Gospel of the Kingdom did not face the denominational chaos we face today. But they fought hard against rampant paganism and equally against a persistent “Jewish” element who had difficulty seeing that the New Covenant is not just a repeat of the Old. At a memorable council in Jerusalem (Acts 15) a monumentally important decision was taken by Apostles working under the influence of the spirit of God and of Jesus.

Gentiles did not need to be circumcised to become full members of God’s household and covenant. This was a brand new departure. Genesis 17 had, to the contrary, stipulated that every male, national and foreigner, who wanted to count as fully a member of the people of God, had to undergo physical circumcision. All that changed in Acts 15, as God worked with His people under a New Covenant. But the decision in Acts 15 has in principle not been accepted by those who do not see that the barriers between Jews and Gentiles were broken down in terms of

calendar and food laws, “the law of commandments in ordinances,” which Jesus abolished at the cross. He then inaugurated in his blood the age of the New Covenant, which is not the same as the Old (Eph. 2:15). Anyone doubting this should fully ponder 2 Corinthians 3 where Paul showed how the Mosaic system was obsolete and Galatians 4 where he compared the Sinai episode to Hagar and bondage. Sabbaths, Holy Days, and New Moons, the complete range of Old Testament celebrations (so listed no less than 11 times in the Hebrew Bible), become now *a single shadow* replaced by the substance, the reality which is Christ (Col. 2:16, 17).

Our thesis in *Focus on the Kingdom* remains broadly the same as when we began in 1998. From the second century alien ideas from the Greek world of philosophy and pagan religion interfered with the pure monotheism of Jesus, who was a Jew. The Church no longer followed Jesus in its creed. It began to imbibe and recite a bafflingly difficult creed which confesses belief in one God who is one “substance” comprising three coequal and coeternal “Persons” — a Trinity.

It is a Trinity which is stoutly and resolutely announced as a valid form of monotheism. But note carefully: the factor of oneness has shifted in comparison with the creed of Jesus. The oneness of Trinitarianism is a oneness of substance or “essence” (*ousia* in Greek). In the Bible, however, God is a single **Person**, certainly not an impersonal essence. Moreover, since singular personal pronouns designate a single person, God is said to be a single Person thousands of times. What needs to be repeated constantly is that Jesus counted the right creed to be the basis of good religion. In fact his creed was part of the “the most important command of all” (Mark 12:28-34).

It was not a Trinitarian creed. Jesus was not a Trinitarian and so why should his followers be?

Let us remind ourselves again of this precious creed of Jesus. In Mark 12:29 Jesus the Messiah is on record as informing us all that the God of the Bible “is one Lord.” “The Lord our God is *one Lord*.”

Now really, is that a confusing and complex proposition? Is it? Is “one Lord” equivalent to three Lords in one essence? Hardly. Is not Jesus’ version of true religion a plain and intelligible proposition for all to enjoy and embrace as the key to sound theological thinking about the meaning and constitution of the universe? “The Lord our God is one Lord” (*kurios eis* —

eis being the masculine singular form of the numeral “one”).

Jews to this day recoil at the suggestion that the Triune God can be matched with their “one Lord God.” The Hebrew Bible knows nothing at all of a God in three Persons. Nor does the New Testament which did not depart from Jesus’ own creed.

And Muslims, a billion and a half of them, shrink from any proposition which deviates from the unitary monotheism of the Koran. Just imagine the dialogues which might ensue if Muslims, Jews and Christians could agree at least that God is a single Person — the One Yahweh of the *biblical* heritage which Jesus loved so much.¹

Unfortunately well-informed evangelicals seem mesmerized by the Trinitarian idea, despite their excellent insights in other areas of Bible study. Take for example Dave Hunt, author of many fine biblical studies. He mentions in his September, 2006 *Berean Call* this interesting fact: “The One whom the Bible calls ‘The God of Israel’ is so designated 203 times.” Yes, indeed, the God of Israel. But note that this God is a single Person, not a tri-personal essence — certainly not a tri-personal “What” comprised of three “Who’s.” Readers of the Hebrew Bible would be shocked to hear from Hank Hanegraaff that their God was a “What” comprising three “Who’s.” No, the God of Jesus’ Bible is a single “Who,” one divine Person.

Dave Hunt forgets the single-Person God of Israel: “Unquestionably the Hebrew prophets all agree that God exists as a Tri-Unity, three Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but one God and that in the Messiah He becomes man.” But where does the word GOD in the Hebrew Bible ever mean a Triune God? Hunt cites no examples. God is a single Person, a single “I” and “Me” and “Him” countless thousands of times. It is to abandon the grammatical meaning of Scripture to claim that single personal pronouns mean *more than one person*. God is the Father who created Israel (Mal. 2:10), not three Persons.

Moreover, according to the Old Testament God was to *beget* a Son. To beget means to “bring into existence,” and so the Son cannot be “eternal, without beginning”! When was this “begetting” going to happen?

Listen to the famous prophecy in 2 Samuel 7:14: “I will be a father to him [the Messiah] and he will be a son to me.” The text does not say, “I *am* already the eternal Father of an eternally begotten Son.” The Son is going to begin his existence at a time *future to David*, his ancestor. David is indeed his ancestor and ancestors precede their sons (see also 1 Chron. 17:13).

¹ I am not suggesting that the God of the Koran and the Bible are to be identified.

But another text speaks of the Son as being “begotten today.” “You are My Son, this day I have begotten you” (Ps. 2:7). This is a prophetic oracle, and the New Testament ought to be our guide as to what moment of time the Psalmist was referring to. Note how Paul uses that text about the begetting of the Son. “God raised Jesus,” Paul said in Acts 13:33, “just as it is written [in Psalm 2:7]: ‘You are my Son: Today I have become your Father.’”

When? Paul just explained. “God raised up Jesus.” The same expression had been used of the birth of David in verse 22 (“He raised up David”). It refers to bringing someone on to the stage of history. Paul was not speaking in Acts 13:33 of the resurrection of Jesus. (The KJV is mistranslated here; it adds the word “again” which is not in the text.) That fact — about *resurrection* — as distinct from the birth of Jesus is mentioned in the next verse, verse 34: “And as for the fact that God raised him *from the dead*, no more to return to corruption, he spoke in this way...” (and Paul then produces his proof text for the resurrection).

Now notice very carefully the contrast between verses 33 and 34. Verse 33 refers to the beginning of Jesus’ life: “Today I have begotten you.” Verse 34 adds a new thought, and this time the resurrection is Paul’s subject: “God raised him *from the dead*.”

F.F. Bruce was one excellent commentator among many who observed this important distinction between the raising up of Jesus, his beginning, and the later resurrection of Jesus *from the dead*. Bruce says that Paul in Acts 13:33 tells us that God raised up Jesus “in the sense in which He raised up David in verse 22.” Verse 33 is the fulfillment of the promise that David would have the Messiah as his Son. Bruce then observes: “Verse 34 refers to the resurrection of Jesus...*From the dead* differentiates this verse from verse 33,” which has to do with the birth of Jesus (see his commentary on the Greek text of Acts).

Do you see that important application of Psalm 2:7 to the beginning and begetting of the Son of God? The writer to the Hebrews (Heb. 1:5) actually *combined* the 2 Samuel 7:14 quotation “I [God] will be a father to him” with the one from Psalm 2:7: “I have begotten him.” Thus he concentrated our attention on the all-important *timing* of the begetting and beginning of the Son. He used two corroborating texts to confirm his point.

Psalm 2 is an oracle and a prophecy. David was a prophet. In the phrase “kiss the Son” (Ps. 2:11) he is talking about the future arrival of Jesus in his Kingdom. That is when the Son will be active. David did not mean at all that the Son of God was already in existence when David wrote the Psalm. The whole psalm is a prophecy of the future.

That connection — connecting the dots — between Psalm 2:7, 2 Samuel 7 and Hebrews 1:5 provides a most illuminating insight into who the Son of God is and how God became his Father by miraculous begetting. Gabriel merely confirms this truth by explaining in Luke 1:35 the basis and reason why Jesus is to be the Son of God. “For that reason exactly [because of the miracle in Mary] the child to be begotten will be holy, the Son of God.” Thus Acts 13:33, Hebrews 1:5, Psalm 2:7 and Luke 1:35 all fit together (cp. also Matt. 1:18, 20, the *genesis* and the begetting of Jesus: “what is *begotten* in her”). Remember that “to beget” means to “bring into existence,” “to cause to exist.” So the whole idea that the Son of God had no beginning but was “eternally begotten” is incoherent. The word “beget” has a perfectly clear meaning in Greek and in English. It is the word that tells us that a person is given existence and that he did not exist before he began to exist!

The Christian Gospel

Then there is the issue of the Gospel. Reading the current literature in book, booklet and tract one becomes conscious of a giant muddle. Definitions of the “Gospel” seem transfixed by the notion that Jesus did not preach the Gospel! They seem mesmerized by the concept that the Gospel is strictly about the death and resurrection of Jesus.

We opened our first edition of *Focus on the Kingdom* with these words:

“The driving conviction behind this publication includes our recognition of an appalling fact. The public in general has been lulled into thinking that salvation in the New Testament consists in believing that Jesus died and rose again — believing, in other words, facts about what *happened to* Jesus, to the practical exclusion of what Jesus *preached and taught*.

“A very popular evangelist, in a tract circulated in thousands of copies in various languages, tells us that ‘Jesus came to do three days work — to die, be buried and rise from death.’ This we believe to be a stunningly misleading statement.

“Jesus made his own intentions crystal clear in a kind of ‘John 3:16’ encapsulation of the reason for his whole mission. The neglect of Jesus’ words when he unpacks his own mind and purpose is nothing less than a theological disaster, requiring urgent attention and repair. Jesus announced in Luke 4:43 (a verse, surely, deserving prominence in any discussion of Christianity) that he ‘*must* proclaim the Gospel about the Kingdom of God: That is the reason why God sent me.’

“‘As God sent me, so I send you’ (John 20:21) were the words of the Great Commission as John recorded it. Quite simply and obviously, then, Christians are those who, like Jesus, will be found proclaiming the Gospel

about the Kingdom of God: That is the reason why they are sent. While confusion reigns about what the Kingdom of God is, a paralysis has afflicted the Great Commission. And the Gospel is depleted. We want to do our part to rectify this very unfortunate situation.

“While uncertainty reigns as to what the Gospel *is*, how can Jesus’ Gospel summons to repentance and belief *in the Gospel* succeed (Mark 1:14, 15)?

“For too long Christians have uncritically accepted the status quo. And that cherished status quo dictates, in the form of an all-pervading dogma, that the death and resurrection of Jesus comprise the *whole* Gospel.

“If that is so, we argue, what do we make of those many chapters in Matthew, Mark and Luke which tell us with brilliant clarity that Jesus was preaching *the* Gospel, but which contain not a word (at that stage) about his death and resurrection? That is the question Christians of all levels of understanding are invited to face — and face squarely and honestly.”

Nothing seems to have changed in evangelicalism. Individuals, however, in various denominations across the world are sensing, often from their own private studies, that a Gospel minus the Kingdom of God is misleading.

The giant muddle over the Gospel is well illustrated in an interesting book by a Dallas Theological Seminary pastor and professor. He is unhappy with the “Ask Jesus into your heart” form of the Gospel which he rightly says misconstrues the invitation in Revelation 3:20 from Jesus that he will “come in to” the one who invites him. Cocoris points out that the invitation there is not to “enter the heart” of the believer but to come into his house to fellowship with him. Further, this invitation is offered to persons *who are already Christians*. It is not an invitation to “get saved.”

On pages 57-63 of his *Evangelism: A Biblical Approach* Cocoris attempts to define the Gospel. He points to three options and then dismisses the obvious description of it, from the lips of Jesus, as the **Gospel about the Kingdom of God** (Mark 1:14, 15) — a verse which offers the most succinct and powerful summary of the Christian faith that you will find anywhere in the Bible. But evangelicals have refused it, on the mistaken premise that somehow Jesus was not a preacher of the Gospel at all! (Compare the mistaken statement of C.S. Lewis that “the Gospel is not in the gospels.”)

We maintain that Jesus’ whole purpose was to preach as Gospel the Gospel of the Kingdom. Jesus stated this as clearly as words can express it, in Luke 4:43. That defining purpose of all evangelism has surely not changed, but it has if one examines tracts, booklets and books defining the Gospel today. Luke 4:43 as a key, along with Mark 1:14, 15, is simply missing.

But how can the purpose of Jesus remain unstated by evangelicals claiming to be preaching the Gospel? Does

Rick Warren's *Purpose-Driven Church* take as its starting point the all-important fact about *Jesus'* purpose? Would that not be the obvious place from which to launch the discussion about the purpose of Christianity? If we love the Messiah and the One God who commissioned him, would we not be drawn first and foremost to Jesus' dramatic statement about what he considered to be the all-important Christian purpose:

"I must preach the Gospel of the Kingdom to the other cities also: That is the reason for which I was sent." Simple, clear logic. Unmistakable clarity. No possible room for misunderstanding. And yet this verse in Luke 4:43 gets almost no mention in popular preaching.

When leading evangelical scholars go into print protesting against some of the slick "easy believe" versions of the Gospel which quote no words from Jesus (John 3:16 is almost the sole exception), they rightly ask us all to consider a more substantial account of the Gospel. But I think they miss the greater point, that Jesus' is the model preacher of the Gospel. They seem driven by the notion that he just died and rose

Michael Cocoris seems to avoid Jesus' approach to and definition of the Gospel so thoroughly documented in the Synoptics. He is immediately in 1 Corinthians 15:1-3 telling us that this is the best possible place for defining the Gospel. He does not note that Paul said that the death and resurrection of Jesus are "amongst things of first importance," not the whole Gospel. Then he goes on to ask: "Which of these 'gospels' is to be preached in evangelism? Mark 16:15 says 'preach the Gospel.' But what exactly did Jesus have in mind? Mark 1:14, 15 says that John preached the Kingdom [actually it says there that *Jesus* preached the Kingdom]." He then mentions that "the Gospel of the Kingdom must be preached in all the world before Jesus returns." Next he asks: "Is the Gospel of the Kingdom the message in evangelism today? No. The Gospel of the Kingdom is to be taught today and it will be preached during the tribulation period which precedes the Second Coming of Christ; but the message in evangelism today is the gospel of the grace of God."

I would ask the reader to think about what has just been said in this quotation. The Kingdom Gospel is to be taught today but not preached. Is anyone the wiser for that extraordinary statement? Further the Gospel of the Kingdom is to be *preached* only at a future period. Meanwhile our Gospel in evangelism today is "the Gospel of the grace of God."

I suggest that this is dreadfully confusing. Let it be pointed out immediately that in Paul's mind the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom and the preaching of the Gospel of grace are exactly the same thing! The wise F.F. Bruce added his weight to our protest in *Focus on the Kingdom* when he observed in his commentary on Acts that "It is evident from a comparison of Acts 20:24, 25

that the preaching of the Gospel of the grace of God is identical with the proclamation of the Kingdom...The proclaiming of the Kingdom (20:25) is the same as testifying to the Good News of God's grace (20:24)."

There is, happily, only one Gospel and it is the Gospel of the Kingdom, including of course also the facts about Jesus' death, resurrection and future return. That Gospel of the Kingdom is indeed none other than God's gospel of grace.

But evangelicalism has divided and conquered, has set Jesus against Paul and made Paul the preacher of grace *in contrast to Jesus'* preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom, which is quite wrongly relegated to a future time, by this alien Gospel system. Cocoris goes on to say that in his opinion the two "forms" of the Gospel can be distinguished but not divorced. But he then proceeds to separate them and give his surprising verdict that the Gospel of the Kingdom is *not* the Gospel in evangelism today.² Jesus, then, has been systematically silenced. His Gospel is not for us!

More about Who Jesus Is

We mentioned above the wonderful clarity provided by Jesus' lucid statement that preaching *the Gospel of the Kingdom* was the basis of and reason for his whole mission and career (Luke 4:43). While we are talking about clarity and reason, we should never forget the explosive power of Luke 1:35, which likewise gives the biblical *reason* why Jesus is the Son of God. "For that *reason* precisely (*dio kai*)," says Gabriel on a mission from God, "the holy one to be begotten [= brought into existence] will be *called the Son of God.*"

On that text, we believe, and on many like it, the history of the Church will one day have to be revised dramatically. While churches rest on the dogma that the Son of God is an *uncreated* being, without beginning and without end, Gabriel here throws a bombshell into traditional theology. Gabriel speaks of the Son as one who is procreated in Mary, in time, and in the human biological chain. He defines the Son of God precisely as one who "comes into existence," who has a beginning and one who is himself (not some abstract "human nature") the lineal descendant of David and Son of God.

We dare not interfere with the Creator's intention to create the head of the new race of mankind by a biological miracle performed in a Jewish young lady. The parallel is with Adam. Here we are witnessing, a mere 2000 years ago, the stupendous miracle by which God embarked on a second creation. The first one had failed in Adam and all his progeny. The second, headed by God's unique and "own Son," succeeds, both in Jesus and those who follow him and his teachings as the Messiah of God.

² See pp. 58, 59.

The notion that this second Adam was really, in his origin and personal center and ego, GOD Himself ruins the story. The real story is that God *created* a new Adam, whom he named Jesus.

Imagine a wild “conspiracy theory,” as far off the truth as the idea (actually held by some) that the planes which assaulted the Twin Towers were really planned by America itself and were not in fact commercial airlines. Imagine that one day someone came up with a theory that when astronauts return to earth they are really *visiting* earth from another location, that their origin is in other galaxies and they then take a journey to the earth. They really never started off from a launching pad on this earth. They are aliens from another location.

Something like this has happened to the scriptural Christian story. The Son of God, it is said, is really not originally a human being, but a second member of an eternal Triune Godhead, who one day decides to come literally to earth, and entering the womb, to “put on” human nature and be “born.”

That sort of a Jesus, woven now for the past nearly 2000 years into the fabric of traditional creeds and confessions and buttressed by voluminous treatises on “systematic theology,” is not really the Jewish Jesus of the New Testament, whose origin is quite plainly as a supernaturally begotten human being.

The public is largely unaware of the Jesus of the system they subscribe to, but when this “Jesus” is unpacked it will be found that he is much less than human. He is in fact God Himself, eternally preexisting. Or if you are a Jehovah’s Witness he is really Michael the Archangel visiting the earth and posing as a man. Neither of these models fits the real point of God’s Messiah (Luke 2:26). The Lord Messiah (Luke 2:11) is not the Lord God. He is the Son of that one Lord God. He is the second Adam, and Adam did not preexist his own birth. Jesus has to be the lineal descendant of the Jewish King David. Other candidates are frauds.

Matthew works hard to contradict the post-biblical revised story, fashioned in the imagination of Greek philosophically-minded “church fathers.” He opens the New Testament documents by speaking of the “origin” of the Son in Mary (Matt. 1:18: *genesis*). Joseph was given the real story. “What is generated,³ begotten in her, is from holy spirit,” the operational presence and power of God Himself (Matt. 1:20). The “origin” of the Son is on earth, not in another non-human realm. Certainly God performed a miracle to bypass the need for a human father, but His unique Son is nevertheless a member, from the start, of the human race. That Christian story

³ Note that the word is “begotten,” not “conceived.” It is the action of the Father, bringing the Son into existence.

was dramatically changed from the second century onwards, after Bible times.

Operating within a Greek Gnostic system of thinking, the “church fathers” began to construct a new concept of who the Son of God is. He must have been, they said, a preexisting intermediary between the one distant God and the earth. The one distant God could not, they argued, Himself deal with the earth. He needed an intermediary in the form of a non-human Son “begotten” not in Mary but in outer space *before Genesis 1*. That story prevailed, and it has been one of the objects of this magazine to stir readers into a Berean search for truth about the real Christian story, rather than the contrived Greek one manufactured in the second century, along a Gnostic model. Jesus was not in fact an emanation, or Gnostic “eon.” He was at his origin a flesh and blood baby conceived by Mary, begotten by the overshadowing power of God’s spirit. As such he is one of us, although unique as he has no human father, and is sinless — a pioneer of the new human race of God’s new creation, and the model for man in harmony with the One God.

Dave Hunt is a marvelous exponent of much in the New Testament, but I doubt if he has faced Luke 1:35 squarely. There is no doctrine of Incarnation there, no story of a preexisting Son entering the womb of his mother from outside and appearing as a human being. No path to the Trinity. But Mr. Hunt has to find evidence of a Trinity. He simply reads it into Luke from passages in which he thinks he has found it elsewhere. But does he do justice to the texts which he imagines allow him to find it in Luke and Matthew? And what happens when Matthew and Luke are turned into Trinitarians? Jesus himself was a Jew believing with his heritage that God is the Father alone (John 17:3). Such is the marvelous simplicity of the biblical definition of God. How God can be three and yet really one has been presented as an incomprehensible “mystery.” But the Bible knows nothing of such an inscrutable enigma.

It was only when the word “Lord” as a title for Jesus was misunderstood that the problems and squabbles began. The argument went like this: “‘Lord’ is one of the words for God in the Hebrew Bible.” This of course is true. What is not true is that “Lord” applied to Jesus means that he is to be identified as “the One God.” Jesus is the “the Lord *Christ*” (Luke 2:11) the “Lord Messiah,” “the Lord Jesus Messiah” (many times). He is the unique human person now at the right hand of the One God, his Father. But he is the human lord of Psalm 110:1, not God Himself. He is *adoni* (my lord) of that verse, referred to over and over in the New Testament, and not *Adonai* (the Lord God).

Paul laid out his confession in 1 Corinthians 8:4-6. He is firmly rooted in the Shema of Deuteronomy 6:4 and of Jesus in Mark 12:29: “To us there is one God, the

Father, and no other God besides Him.” Paul is thus a unitary monotheist. He had been all of his life. He then adds that next to that One God, there is now an exalted human being who is “one Lord Jesus Messiah.” Paul has not “enriched” the creed of Israel! He has not “revised” it. He has not “expanded” it. To do so would be to betray his monotheistic heritage. We would surely do well to echo the creed of Jesus and Paul. Try doing this publicly. A few eyebrows may be raised — so far have we departed from some of the most basic facts of the Bible.

Evangelicalism seems to feel threatened by any suggestion that its own major criterion for defining a Christian — “Jesus is God” — might not be fair to the Bible. Labels are often fastened on adherents of any view which objects to the supposed gold-standard “Jesus is God” — heretics, liberals, unbelievers, and so on. But those of us who are insisting that Jesus is the *Son of God*, not God, have not abandoned the faith of the New Testament, though we do object to the decisions of councils 300 years later. We are only asking for a reasonable answer to what to us is a very reasonable question: If Jesus is God, and the Father is God, then does that not make two who are God and thus two Gods? And we are asking, if Jesus cited and approved the Jewish unitarian creed, “Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord,” why do we not hear this unitarian creed in evangelical churches?

Edith Schaeffer, wife of evangelical scholar Francis Schaeffer, composed a wonderful protest against much of what she experienced in evangelicalism when she wrote *Christianity Is Jewish*. (This magazine resonates with that simple and obvious fact.) Mrs. Schaeffer begins with the famous lines: “How odd of God to choose the Jews, but not so odd as those who choose the Jewish God and hate the Jew.” But do they really choose the Jewish God, or have they chosen a strange God? Perhaps the lines should go on: “How odd that those who choose the Jewish Jesus do not choose his Jewish God — that’s the thing that’s really odd.”✧

Points to Ponder

“All truth passes through three stages. First, it is ridiculed. Second, it is violently opposed. Third, it is accepted as being self-evident” (Arthur Schopenhauer, 1788-1860).

H.G. Wells wrote about Jesus’ Gospel of the Kingdom: “This doctrine of the Kingdom of Heaven, which was the main teaching of Jesus, and which plays so small a part in the Christian creeds, is certainly one of the most revolutionary doctrines that ever stirred and changed human thought.”⁴

H.G. Wells captured the contrast between Jesus and churches: “As remarkable is both the enormous

prominence given by Jesus to the teaching of what he called the Kingdom of Heaven, and its comparative insignificance in the procedure and teaching of most of the Christian churches...Is it any wonder that to this day this Galilean is too much for our small hearts?”

“I believe that the Bible is to be understood and received in the plain and obvious meaning of its passages; for I cannot persuade myself that a book intended for the instruction and conversion of the whole world should cover its true meaning in any such mystery and doubt that none but critics and philosophers can discover it” (Daniel Webster).

“The Bible places the word foremost amongst the instruments of revelation. The Bible knows of the speaking God. God avails Himself of human thought and speech to make Himself known and His speech intelligible, so far as knowledge of Him is requisite for sinners to overcome by it sin and death.”⁵

On Calvin’s doctrine of predestination: “Here we may want to say at once as most critics of Calvin have done: Is this biblical, not to say Christian — this insistence on God’s absolute omnipotence and man’s consequent nothingness? Granted that once, and once only, Paul expressed God’s absolute sovereignty over man His creature in terms of the potter and the pot (Rom. 9:20-21): still when pressed to its logical conclusion, as Calvin does press it, such complete and absolute divine causality is surely nearer to the Mohammedan concept of Allah, **or to oriental philosophies of Fate**, than to the witness of the Bible. If Calvin insists so unflinchingly that the will of God is the sole cause of all that has ever been, is or will be, how does this differ from determinism? Calvin may deny it, but human freedom and responsibility are illusory if everything happens of necessity.”⁶

What is the difference between Nebuchadnezzar throwing three young Jews into a fiery furnace for not worshipping his God and Calvin ordering the Christian unitarian Servetus to be burned to death in 1553 for not accepting Calvin’s “orthodox” God? “Bow or burn” seems to be common to both events — ed.

Comments

No need to hide our unitarian belief that God is the Father of Jesus:

“It is always good to try to find common ground with those with whom we seek to carry on dialogue. However, I will have to agree with Anthony on this one. You suggest we use the term ‘Trunity.’ I’m not laughing at the term ‘Trunity,’ but I am concerned that we explain — kindly and lovingly — exactly what we believe the

⁵ Dr. Martin Kähler, “Revelation,” in *New Schaff Herzog*, Vol. 10, p. 6.

⁶ J.S. Whale, *The Protestant Tradition*, p. 137.

⁴ *The Outline of History*, 1961, Vol. 1, p. 426.

Bible teaches. Since we agree with Jesus that the *Shema* of Israel (Mark 12:29; Deut. 6:4) declares that there is only one Person who is truly God (see also John 17:3), and since Jesus explained to the Samaritan woman that the Jews were right in their doctrine of God (John 4:21-24), we have no recourse other than that of making known this understanding to all others. We cannot in all honesty appear to be in any real agreement with the Trinitarian error.” — *Washington*

“Greetings to you and your family. I would just like to thank you for the wonderful conference you hosted in April last. There is so much to learn; still we are getting there with the help of God’s Spirit. I bought three of your books *The Amazing Aims and Claims of Jesus* — an excellent work, so very carefully laid out and with all the necessary Scripture. I gave them to three friends. Two were very excited. In fact one guy said to me, ‘I felt the veil fall from me’ — what an admission; he certainly seems very much on the right road. I’ve heard nothing as yet from the third friend; I think it might be a bit too hard-hitting for her whose life has been focused in the charismatic/traditional mode; still let’s hope it will make a difference.

“Again Greg Deuble’s book is an excellent read, so concise with good historical information. My intention again is to hand out the book to a select few. A friend of mine finds it quite technical; I guess it is, if one is not used to studying theological articles especially where Greek and Hebrew words are used.

“Your debate with Professor Sanders of Biola University I really enjoyed. You were straight down the line whereas Dr. S was more philosophical and abstract at times and with very little Scripture. I think you won the day...

“I’m listening to Dan Mages’ debate. He is very good; his opponent was so very harsh. I’m amazed that so little time was given for the rebuttal; this is so important — in fact a life/death issue about God and His Son and here we are worrying over 15 minutes.” — *England*

“I have been receiving the *Focus on the Kingdom* paper for some time now and look forward to it. Thank you so very much for your insightful research and writings. I feel as though I have found that oasis in the desert or see the rescue ship nearing, and am at once uplifted and inspired! I have one friend here in the Vancouver area who also reads your material and with whom I can share, but both of us wish we could access the company of likeminded searchers!” — *Canada*

“I am enjoying the books immensely and we are having quite a few discussions in my home over this, with R. He is slowly admitting he is a non-Trinity One God believer. The key here has been also the Gospel of the Kingdom teachings. Jesus the king and ruler of all, Lord of Lords hands back all authority to God (at the end of

the millennium), so that God the Father might be all in all (I Cor. 15:27, 28). My friend was not really expecting that, and honestly, I have never seen it this way quite before.

“He has said that in the past he wondered, where are all the Kingdom Gospel teachers, and what was the Gospel of the Kingdom and why is it not preached? Now we know. The books have answered the questions beautifully and cause us to see our future resurrection in Christ in a much clearer way. ‘Heaven’ is not mentioned in Scripture as our destination and death is really death. The dead are not conscious — but dead and as they used to say, having a ‘dirt nap.’ These teachings were not perfectly easy for him or for me for that matter, but I have grasped them. We looked over the Scriptures and see how very much we have been duped by a spirit of error on these things. Bless you so much for opening our eyes.” — *California*

“I have read and handed out many copies of *The Doctrine of the Trinity* book. Thank you for your ministry! Would you have any information on fellowships in the Seattle/Tacoma area? My wife and I were forced to leave our home church of 10 years for the accurate knowledge of God in Christ. There are other brethren who have experienced the same ‘ousting,’ if you will, and are seeking fellowship. We have only been able to find various web sites. Most of the Messianic churches around here are Trinitarian or Binitarian. We have nowhere to go but are content in our faith and circumstance. What a blessing to be worshiping the One and Only YHWH through Christ His Son the Lord.” — *Washington*

“I think it is relevant for me to say that I am a professor of theology and of New Testament at a Roman Catholic institution...and that I think that your publication *Focus on the Kingdom* is theologically important, however much it may be neglected by the sector that I thus represent. You address radically important issues in Christian theology which are entirely appropriate because in fact the theological exercise is only adolescent and in need of further guidance. I think you are doing a good work that I hope will eventually have an impact on my own church tradition. There is much work to be done before we can, collectively, think clearly and I am glad that your magazine’s honesty about these things is so unflinching.” — *Canada*

“The heart of the man of good sense goes in search of knowledge, but foolish things are the food of the unwise” (Proverbs 15:14, The Bible in Basic English).

16th Theological Conference

March 29-April 1, 2007

Simpsonwood Conference Center, Norcross, GA

Suggestions on topics are welcome. Please send to

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