

Focus on the Kingdom

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The Human Jesus

You can now watch the two-hour documentary *The Human Jesus* at jesusishuman.com. Go to that web address, and I think you will be informed and encouraged by the discussion of the perennially important question of the identity of the one and only real Jesus. You are going to hear opinions from many different quarters. You will hear a Muslim and a Jewish expert express their perplexity over Christianity's apparent departure from the strict monotheism of Scripture and of the Koran. You will hear members of the public, charmingly willing to be stopped in a shopping mall and interviewed about what they think the Trinity means. You will catch up on the important and sometimes awful facts about the brutal treatment of dissenters by the "orthodox" Church.

You may wish to strengthen your hand in terms of dealing with various Bible verses related to the definition of God and of the Son. "Difficult texts" are dealt with in some detail. You will see and hear a distinguished professor at Fuller Seminary comment on John 1:1 and how it does not say "in the beginning was *the Son*"! You will be empowered to engage your friends in conversation about these momentous issues. The new video has been watched by over 300 persons in the week it has been available. I believe the public must be interested in clarifying who the Savior Jesus is and who that one God is who commissioned him.

Our two-hour video, compiled and directed by Mark Dockery over an extended period, captures the heart of the central biblical doctrine that Jesus is a part of the human race. He is not a Person arriving from a non-human, angelic or eternal sphere of existence. He is not an angel transmuted into a fetus. He is the human Messiah of Israel who was promised for centuries in the Hebrew Bible as the lineal descendant of David. Since Jesus is of the line of David, he cannot possibly have existed before that line began. If one is *descended* from David, as the Messiah must be to qualify as Messiah, he cannot be older than David. David is his "father" and no son is older than his father!¹

¹The public should be aware of mistranslations in some English versions, for example the NIV in John 13:3, 16:28 and 20:17 which quite wrongly tell you that Jesus was going *back* to God. Watch out too for 1 John 5:7 in the KJV which is a forgery, not part of the original Greek, and John 1:15, 30 which give the impression that Jesus was older than John,

Standard Christian creeds have made belief in the Messiah, son of David, extraordinarily difficult. The public has been steered away from careful inspection of the issues by the dogmatic and sometimes threatening declarations of the learned. Thankfully people read their Bibles and they see what seems obvious, that Jesus is the Son of God and of David and of Mary. They spend very little time wondering how that Messiah fits with the creeds of their church, which tell them that Jesus is God the Son and therefore actually God! They have not allowed themselves to ponder the startling fact that if the Father is God and the Son is God, that would add up to *two* Gods, a proposition from which most would presumably shrink in horror! Christians surely are aware that such a belief is dangerous.

Perhaps in fact their church's creed remains permanently on the back burner, is almost never the subject of a sermon or Sunday school lesson, and does not interfere with what they instinctively and truthfully find from their own Bible reading. After all, is it too much to expect ordinary readers to believe with Jesus that "You [Father] are the only one who is truly God" (John 17:3) and that Jesus is the Son of God? What Son of God *means* is expressly defined in the classic theological lesson given to us and to Mary by Gabriel in Luke 1:35: Jesus is the Son of God, for the precise and only reason (*dio kai*) that *he was miraculously begotten by God in time and in history*. How amazingly remote and alien would our current creeds have seemed to Mary and the first-century believers.

This video we hope will advance the cause of truth and the recovery of first-century faith. It will help to remove a cloudy veneer which centuries of tradition have imposed on the faith of Jesus. The effects on dialogue between world religions are likely to be powerful, and one day the whole world will repose in the wonderfully unifying belief that "the LORD [is] *the only* one and His name *the only* one" (Zech. 14:9). Jesus of course long ago told us what we can all now read for ourselves in Mark 12:28-34, that the unique single Personhood of the Lord God is the foundation of all sound belief.

Thanks to Danny Dixon for some valuable extra editing and putting the video on the internet. ✧

although John was six months older than Jesus! Jesus was in fact John's *superior*, not chronologically his senior. Check the ambiguity of the Greek word *protos*, "before" or "superior to."

Christ's Standard of Discipleship

Jesus makes uncompromising demands on us as disciples of his. There is no part-time or half-baked Christianity as Jesus sees it. Today in our world of quick fixes and trite gimmicks we are sometimes exposed to “user friendly” ways of getting saved quickly and painlessly. Some preachers seem not to reflect Jesus’ hard-hitting approach to the young nobleman who wanted “eternal life.” Just “put up your hand or bow your head and believe that I died for you.” But Jesus said, “If you want to be saved, keep the commandments.” “Not everyone who says Lord to me will be saved.” Immediately we hear the rabbi and Savior issuing a tough order. Obedience to Jesus is the essence of salvation. The young man had also to be willing to give up the idol of riches which might have threatened his spiritual success.

“God gives his spirit to those who obey him” (Acts 5:32). “Jesus was made the author of eternal salvation to all those who obey him” (Heb. 5:9). “If anyone does not adhere to the health-giving words, namely those of the Lord Jesus Christ,” he knows nothing (see 1 Tim. 6:3). “If anyone comes to you and does not bring the teaching of Christ...” (see 2 John 9, 10). “He who believes in the Son has life; but he who disobeys the Son...the wrath of God hangs over him” (John 3:36).

Obviously “believing” does not count as believing if it does not develop into obedience. Jesus was quite clear on this point: “It is not everyone who says to me ‘Lord, Lord,’ who will enter the Kingdom [be saved], but only those who do God’s will. Many will say on that future day, ‘Lord, Lord, we preached as Christians in your name; we expelled demons in your name and we did wonderful works in your name.’” Then come the chilling words: “I never recognized you; leave me, you workers of lawlessness” (Matt. 7:21-23).

The Philippian jailer too was given his instructions. He had asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved,” was the apostolic reply (Acts 16:30, 31). But there is a lot to “believing in Jesus” — obedience for the “long haul” and a life of discipleship in the steps of Jesus, taking up the cross of suffering from hostile opponents, and persisting unwaveringly even to death.

It is all too easy to reduce (as theologians say) the Gospel, to sandpaper down its rough, tough edges — to forget *the words* of Jesus and rest content in the fact that he died and rose. It is all too easy to quote a single passage (out of context) from Paul and completely forget the words of Jesus about salvation. But that is to shrink the Gospel. Yes, one can find one’s comforting proof texts. I Corinthians 15:1-3 is often held out as a complete statement of the Gospel, although Paul deliberately said there that the dying and rising of Jesus are “among items of the first importance [*en protois*]” in the Gospel, not the

entire Gospel. Jesus died and rose is certainly absolutely non-negotiable as Gospel. Belief in his supernatural origin as virginally begotten is also part of New Testament faith. Following him in obedience to his words and preaching is also indispensable. And that is where we should start.

Jesus said, “Not everyone who says to me ‘Lord, Lord’ will be saved.” Paul said, “Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” A contradiction? Of course not. Paul was Jesus’ beloved servant. But can these verses be mishandled? Certainly. Mainly by quoting Paul out of his own context and not allowing Jesus to be heard.

That is where the danger lies. Jesus can be “reduced” and almost eliminated. How can this be done? It’s not difficult. You simply don’t preach much from the word and teachings of the historical Jesus. You preach all the time from the letters of Paul, not realizing that Paul is writing to believers who *already knew* the faith from their earlier exposure to evangelists. The letters of Paul are designed to deal with special problems facing the churches. They assume a lot. They assume that we have fully grasped the *Gospel as Jesus preached it, the Gospel about the Kingdom of God*.

Jesus had warned clearly enough. “He who *hears my word* and believes the one who sent me” is on the way to salvation (John 5:24). Let’s hear it again in a refreshing modern translation: “Truly I say to you, The man whose ears are open to *my word* and who has faith in him who sent me, has eternal life; he will not be judged, but has come from death into life” (BBE).

But what is hearing and believing his word? What does that innocent phrase mean? We are back to obedience of course. And that means intelligent understanding and obedient acceptance of Jesus’ Gospel about the Kingdom. My word, said Jesus, is the key to everything, the key to your obedience and salvation. The word in question is called “the word about the Kingdom” (Matt. 13:19). That word is like a seed (Luke 8:11). It contains the life-giving spark of immortality. It enters your life as the Gospel of the Kingdom. It is the agent of rebirth (1 Pet. 1:23-25). All this Jesus summarized when he said, “You must be born again...born of the spirit” (John 3:5, 7).

The Gospel of the Kingdom word is planted as seed in your heart when you eagerly and intelligently embrace it. It must then grow in you and produce the necessary fruit of the spirit, the fruit born of the creative Gospel word. The “word of God,” we must not tire of repeating, is not just “the Bible.” The word is *the Gospel*, the Gospel as Jesus, the founding Gospel preacher (Heb. 2:3), preached it. The saving Gospel. The Gospel which is “energizing” in you,” as Paul said in I Thessalonians 2:13, or as the dynamic power which transforms the dead

sinner into a vital disciple: “I am not ashamed of God’s Gospel” (the Gospel of the Kingdom, see Mark 1:14, 15). Why? Because that Gospel “is the power of God leading to salvation” (Rom. 1:16). Jesus was uncompromising when he stressed the importance of knowing his word and words for salvation: “Whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the sake of the Gospel will save it” (Mark 8:35). Jesus followed this up with: “Whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful society, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels” (Mark 8:38).

Paul was well aware of Jesus’ teaching when he said, “I am not *ashamed* of the Gospel, because it is the power of God leading to salvation for everyone who believes” (Rom. 1:16). What Gospel? Paul had defined it: “the Gospel of God” (Rom. 1:1). And what is that about? Jesus told us. He came “preaching the Gospel of God and saying, ‘The Kingdom of God is coming. Repent and believe that Gospel’” (Mark 1:14, 15).

There we have the secret. The Gospel of the Kingdom, including of course the essential facts about Jesus dying and rising, is the driving force of the Christian life. No wonder, then, “the devil is ready to snatch away the word sown in the heart, so that he cannot believe [that Kingdom Gospel] and *be saved*” (Luke 8:12).

Salvation is inextricably bound up with the saving words of Jesus summarized as the Gospel of the Kingdom. But do you hear that definition of the Gospel today?

The Same Kingdom Gospel Message for All

When the Jews became belligerent and hostile toward Paul and Barnabas, they closed their exclusive ministry to the Jews and turned to the Gentiles (Acts 13:50). Paul’s message to the Jews was right to the point. They needed to accept the Messiah Jesus *who had come*: “Let it be known to you, brethren, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. And through him all who believe are justified [put right with God] in regard to all things, in which you could not be justified by the law of Moses” (Acts 13:38, 39).

“Eternal life” means “Life in the age of the coming Kingdom.” The Bible nowhere promises “heaven” to believers — much less for disembodied spirits or souls at death. The Bible promises only resurrection (of the whole person) at the future coming of Jesus (1 Cor. 15:23) who will then reward Christians “at the resurrection of the just” (Luke 14:14). These will be counted worthy of that coming age of the restored Kingdom on earth. “But those who are considered worthy to attain to *that age* [not ‘go to heaven’!] and to the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage” (Luke 20:35).

Why does one have to struggle to get churchgoers to believe these simple promises? “Inherit the earth.” Is that clear or not? How rarely if ever are these words promoted or heard among churchgoers? Are pew-sitters listening? Christians are destined not to go to heaven but to inherit the earth. Yes, their reward is currently held in reserve for them, with God who is in heaven. But when Jesus comes *back* that reward comes *from heaven* to the earth with the returning Jesus. If I say I am keeping a beer in the fridge for you when you visit me, says the world’s leading biblical theologian, Bishop Tom Wright, does that mean you are going to have to climb into the fridge to drink it?! Do you retire *in the bank* where you have been saving your money all those years?

Jesus stated the Christian goal with complete clarity, but no one in church seems to resonate with his words: “Blessed are the meek; they will inherit the earth” (Matt. 5:5). “They will reign as kings *on the earth*” (Rev. 5:10). All this talk about “heaven” is a quick way to become confused in your Bible reading.

Salvation Involves Our Choice

We have to cooperate with God for our salvation. We cannot pass the buck and make God and Jesus entirely and exclusively responsible for our salvation. Otherwise why does God address the human race by telling us to “choose”? If God has already made an irrevocably predestined choice for us, He is playing verbal games with us. No, He instructs us to “choose life” rather than death (Deut. 30:19). Why would anyone choose death when he or she can choose to live, by listening and obeying God’s Agent, the Lord Messiah? “Work out your own salvation,” comes the apostolic cry to us (Phil. 2:12). God will help you indeed as He works with you and you with Him.

Ought not Jesus to have said to the young nobleman, “No point in inquiring about eternal life, for you are not predestined for it”? Or he might have said, “You have no need to inquire, because you are already predestined to eternal life.” He gave neither answer, but invited the nobleman to make the responsible choice. Harmony between the “predestination” or “free grace” controversy is easily resolved. We choose our destiny and God works with us to secure a successful outcome. All who want to come may come. God wants all to be saved. The only way to come successfully is to yield to the attractive power of the Gospel of the Kingdom as preached by Jesus and Paul (see Acts 8:12; 19:8; 20:24, 25; 28:23, 31). There is no way to God except through Jesus and his Gospel. The Plan has been predetermined. It is our wisdom to get in line with the Plan and surrender our wills to it. The grace of God comes to us in His gracious Gospel of salvation in the coming Kingdom. We must make the choice to accept the terms of salvation.

Yes, the less sophisticated or talented sometimes do a better job of receiving the Gospel. “God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, so that no man may boast before God” (1 Cor. 1:27-29).

Once started, the race towards the Kingdom of God is on and “through much tribulation we are destined to enter the Kingdom” (Acts 14:22). In Philippians 3:13, 14 Paul lays out the challenge to believers: “Brothers and sisters, I do not reckon myself to have reached the goal: but this one thing I do...I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” Paul wants to “know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death; if by any means I might attain to the resurrection of the dead” (Phil. 3:10, 11). It hardly sounds as if it is all inevitable in some fixed decree. Paul must struggle to endure to the end.

The idea of an *unconditional* (the condition is repentance and believing the Gospel) acceptance of sinners by God both *before* they accept Christ, but also after they are converted, no matter how persistently they might continue in sin, constitutes a grave peril. It causes a false sense of security and can amount to carelessness about sin. If I am saved, say some, by an eternal decree that prevents me from ever falling away, why should I be bothered with striving for the prize? Peter knew nothing of a Calvinistic predeterminism. We are given “exceedingly great and precious promises, that by these you might partake of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world through lust” (2 Pet. 1:4). “My brothers, take all the more care to make your selection and approval *certain*; for if you do these things you will never fall” (2 Pet. 1:10). There is no trouble-free Christianity, nor a belief in an inevitable success, no matter what.

There is no immortal spark or soul in us as human beings. Immortality has to be acquired by embracing the words of Jesus, which are the words of God who commissioned him. We are urged to seek immortality. We do not yet have it beyond all chance of losing it. Loss of salvation is hardly a topic on which the New Testament writers concentrate, but the threat is there nevertheless as a warning that “he who thinks he stands” (1 Cor. 10:12) should realize he can fall. Patient well-doing is the essential Christian task and we must persist to the end. “Salvation is now nearer than when we first believed” (Rom. 13:11) — a verse which gets amazingly little airing in Christian circles or tracts.

The faith sounds like hard work: “With all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to

knowledge self-control; and to self-control patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity [love]. For if these qualities are in you, and abound, they ensure that you will not be barren or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 1:5-8).

This “tougher” teaching from the words of Jesus and the apostles about salvation will be rejected by some who seem to have absorbed a sort of “mantra” to the effect that all you need do is “believe in Jesus,” without further definition or explanation. The text usually appealed to and provided in tracts (which say nothing about the words of Jesus relative to being saved) is Romans 10:9: “If you say with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and have faith in your heart that God has made him come back from the dead, you will have salvation.”

This beautiful text should be put in its own context. Paul had just been speaking about “the faith which *we* are preaching” (v. 8). To find out what that was, one should consult the reports of Paul’s evangelistic activity in Acts 19:8, 20:24, 25 and 28:23, 31. Now note what else Paul says in Romans 10. Verse 14 reads: “How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? How will they **believe in him whom they have not heard?** And how will they hear without a preacher?”

Paul insists that to be saved you must hear *not just about Jesus*, but you must *hear him*, that is hear him preach his Gospel. Paul, properly translated here, as in the NASV, teaches that hearing Jesus is necessary for salvation. Hardly unreasonable, since Jesus was the original preacher of the Gospel (Heb. 2:3). Now finally notice how Paul concludes his teaching in Romans 10. Verse 17: “So faith [true belief] comes from hearing, and that means hearing *the word of Christ.*” The word, Gospel, that is, which Jesus preached for salvation.

So then the two verses often extracted unfairly, i.e. 9, 10, easily misrepresent Jesus and Paul. True faith is built on the one Gospel of the Kingdom brought by Jesus, commanded in the Great Commission and preached always by Paul. Readers should be cautioned against a reduced or shrunk Gospel, based on a few verses pulled out of context. The key is to return to Jesus and his Gospel of the Kingdom. Then, too, Paul will not be twisted. ✧

Why It Is Important to Study the Bible

Miranda Baldwin, Atlanta Bible College student

Have you ever asked your parents why they do something to have them answer, “It is just tradition”? Take this story for example: A little girl was watching her mom prepare the roast for dinner, and she noticed that her mom cut off the ends. This baffled the girl. The pan was large enough to hold it, so why did the ends have to be cut off? She asked her mother, “Why do you cut the ends off the roast?” The reply she got was not

satisfying; her mother told her, “I don’t know; this is just how my mother cooked it and I learned it from her.” So the little girl went to her grandmother and asked her the same question only to get the same reply. With some disappointment she went to her great-grandmother and asked her, “Why did you cut the ends off the roast?” Her great-grandmother answered, “Well, hon, I simply did not have a pan big enough to hold it so I had to cut off the ends.”

How does this relate to the Bible? Simple. Today Christians do the same thing, only not with the roast. Christians have fallen for what we might call “traditional Christianity,” reliance on the big names, a situation in which people accept what people have to say without checking it with the Scriptures. This is dangerous. How do you think Plato, Luther, and Augustine made such an impact on religion? People did not verify what they heard against the Bible. They became passive and gullible and, may we say, lazy!

If we do not *study* the Bible we will fall for the deceptions that Satan has placed before us. Satan, the god of this age, has his ways of working deception and his greatest tool in regard to Christians is tradition. In the parable of the sower (Matt. 13, Luke 8) we are told that Satan will come and attack those who have fallen by the wayside and take the precious saving seed from them, so that they will not understand and believe in the good news of the Gospel as Jesus taught it (see Luke 8:12). Truly Satan’s priority is to separate Jesus from his teaching.² We need to be on the alert at all times, comparing what is being taught with Scripture!

In Acts 17:11, we are given an account of a group of people, the Bereans, who studied the Bible daily to see if what Paul was preaching to them was true. Even though the Bereans may have studied with the intention of disproving Paul, their honest hard work and Paul’s truth resulted in them becoming genuine believers.

What are some of the deceptions so far that have made their way into the Church? Heaven as a place for disembodied souls. Nowhere in the Bible does it say that we will, when we die, go to heaven. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David were not promised a cloud or seat or rainbow in heaven but land and kingdoms and descendants and rulership here on earth (Rev. 5:10; Matt. 5:5). God made a covenant with them that their kingdom will be established forever and that they will possess the land in a renewed earth. However, the typical “feel good” message does not engage this topic anymore, because it is easier to tell someone that when they die they will go to heaven instead of sleeping in the grave (*sheol*) until Christ comes back. It is easy to close one’s eyes tight to

the plain statement that “the dead do not know anything” (Ecc. 9:5) and choose to believe the opposite, that the dead are fully conscious in heaven or hell. It is easier, because it is traditional.

Also, to say that God is three or triune is preposterous! Where in the Bible do we read that God is three Persons? Nowhere, but there are many verses that say that Jesus is the *Son* of God. In John 3:16 Jesus taught that God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son. The great creed of Jesus and the Bible, the *Shema* (Deut. 6:4), says that God is one Lord. So God cannot be two or three. God is one and He works through Christ who works through us.

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 are important verses for defining the Gospel. However, they should not be divorced from the multitude of other verses that define the Gospel. Paul was listing there things “of first importance.” Paul certainly did not exclude the Kingdom from the Gospel. In Luke 4:43 Jesus tells us why he was sent: to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom to all (Matt. 28:19, 20). That was the meaning of his whole commission under God. Christianity today has turned a blind eye to what Jesus told us in Luke 4:43. The topic of the Kingdom is put on the “back burner” in the church. Instead of focusing on heralding the good news of the Kingdom of God, Christians are focused on telling people only that Jesus died and was resurrected.

It is obvious that Jesus was not sent *just* to die on the cross, as we may have wrongly picked up from church or Sunday school. Instead he was sent to tell others of the good news of God’s world plan of the Kingdom (Mark 1:14, 15), so that we could be ready by repenting, understanding and believing. Jesus preached for a long time before *later* including in his Kingdom Gospel the additional information about his death and resurrection (Matt. 16:21).

If we are to be followers of Christ shouldn’t we be teaching the message that he was constantly at work preaching as Gospel?✧

Sometimes a Pronoun Is Very Important

This article addresses an important grammatical point in the famous “seventy sevens” prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27. I begin with the words of a famous Hebraist and biblical scholar, Moses Stuart (1780-1852). He asks, What is the right translation of Daniel 9:26b (“his end will come with a flood”)? Whose “end” is being described here?

“*v’kitzo* — and his end; whose end? The obvious grammatical answer is the end of the *nagid haba*, the prince to come. One has only to compare 8:25... ‘he shall be broken in pieces without human hand’ and join this with 11:45, ‘and he shall come to his end (*ad kitzo*) and none to help him (*v ayn ozer lo*),’ in order to see how exactly all three of the passages agree. In all, the end in

²Anthony Buzzard, *The Coming Kingdom of the Messiah*.

question follows the injuries done to the holy city and temple. Manifestly the same personage is concerned. We cannot, therefore, refer 'his end' to city and sanctuary, for the suffix should then be plural; nor to 'he will ruin,' i.e. the action of destruction which ends in overflowing. Indeed such an application would probably never have been thought of, had not that interpretation needed its aid, which makes Titus the Roman chief to be the *nagid*, prince, in this case, who is to destroy city and sanctuary. But such a construction is incompatible with grammar, and equally so with the parallel passages to which reference has been made above."

Other translations have agreed: "And after the sixty-two weeks an Anointed One put to death without his...city and sanctuary ruined by a prince who is to come. **The end of that prince will be catastrophe** and, until the end, there will be war and all the devastation decreed" (Dan. 9:26, New Jerusalem Bible).³

The translation in some versions is: "The people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and sanctuary, and *its end* will come in the flood." Keil (*Commentary on Daniel*) translates, as does RV, GWT, Jerusalem Bible, Jewish Publication Society OT, *International Critical Commentary on Daniel*, *Peake's Commentary*, *Brown Driver and Briggs Lexicon*, etc., "And *his end* will come in the flood." The reference is taken to be to *the evil prince* who is to come who first ruins the city and sanctuary and who dies, comes to his end in the flood of judgment.

Keil says: "'And his end with the flood.' The suffix 'his' refers simply to the hostile prince whose end is emphatically placed in contrast to his coming (agreeing

³ For our German readers here is the Einheitsübersetzung, 1980: Daniel 9:26b: **Er findet sein Ende in der Flut**; bis zum Ende werden Krieg und Verwüstung herrschen, wie es längst beschlossen ist. (Translation: "He [the wicked prince] will find his end in the flood.")

French Jerusalem Bible: La ville et le sanctuaire détruits par **un prince qui viendra. Sa fin** sera dans le cataclysme et, jusqu'à la fin, la guerre et les désastres décrétés. (Translation: "...a prince who will come. His end will be in the cataclysm.")

Traduction Oecumenique de la Bible, 1988: Quant à la ville et au sanctuaire, le peuple d'un **chef à venir les détruira; mais sa fin viendra** dans un déferlement, et jusqu'à la fin de la guerre seront décrétées des dévastations. (Translation: "...a prince to come will destroy them, but his end will come...")

Bible en Français Courant, 1997: Puis un chef viendra avec son armée et détruira la ville et le sanctuaire. Toutefois **ce chef finira** sous le déferlement de la colère divine. **Mais jusqu'à sa mort** il mènera une guerre dévastatrice, comme cela a été décidé. (Translation: "However this ruler will come to his end...")

with Kranichfeld, Hofmann and Kliefoth). Preconceived views as to the historical interpretation of the prophecy lie at the foundation of all other references. The Messianic interpreters who find in the words a prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem [in AD 70], and thus understand by the *nagid* [prince], Titus, cannot apply the suffix 'his' to *nagid* [prince]. Geier, Havernick and others therefore refer the suffix to the city and the sanctuary; but that is grammatically inadmissible, since *ha-ir* [the city] is feminine. Auberlen and others refer it merely to the sanctuary but the separation of the city from the sanctuary is quite arbitrary... Thus there remains nothing else than to apply the suffix to the *nagid*, the prince. *Ketz* [end] can accordingly only denote *the destruction of the prince*... The prince will find *his end* in his warlike expedition... In 7:21, 26 the enemy of God holds superiority till he is destroyed by the judgment of God... 'The people of a prince who will come and find his destruction in the flood.'"⁴

In other words, translations which avoid the reference "his end" to the wicked prince do so because they think that the prophecy *ought* to refer to the Roman invasion of AD 70. Titus did not come to "his end" in that event.

Keil also maintains that the natural subject of "he will confirm" (v. 27) is the same wicked prince, "since the prince who was to come is named last and also the subject of the suffix (*kitzo*, 'his end'), the last clause of verse 26 having only the significance of an explanatory subordinate clause." Kranichfeld: "The reference 'he shall confirm' to the ungodly leader of an army is therefore according to the context and the parallel passages of the book which have been mentioned, as well as in harmony with the natural grammatical arrangement of the passage, and it gives also a congruous sense, although by the *nagid* (prince) Titus cannot naturally be understood."

"The first historical fulfilling of Daniel 11 in the Maccabean times does not exclude a further and *fuller accomplishment in the future*, and the rage of Antiochus Epiphanes against the Jewish temple and the worship of God can only be a type of the assault of Antichrist against the sanctuary and the church of God in the time of the end." "Still less from the words 'whoever reads, let him understand' (Matt. 24:15) can it be proved that Christ had only Dan. 9:27 and not also 11:31 and 12:11 before his view." "On these grounds we must affirm that the reference of the words under consideration to the desecration of the temple before the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 by the Romans is untenable."⁵

Now this is no small matter. If the translation "his end" is correct, Daniel 9:26 cannot possibly have been

⁴ Keil, *Commentary on Daniel*, p. 363.

⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 362-364.

fulfilled in AD 70 (a traditional evangelical view), because Titus did *not come to his end* in that episode.

I think that the translation “*his* [not ‘its’] end” is right for these reasons:

1. It is supported by commentaries that deal with the detail of the language minutely (Keil is typical of these).

2. The nearest singular masculine antecedent for the reference his/its end is the *prince* or his people, not the city or sanctuary or both together.

3. If the city and sanctuary were meant (and these words are further away), the text should read “their end.” To separate city from sanctuary is very unnatural.

4. The Hebrew “his end” has a *masculine singular* pronoun suffix and cannot agree with the city which is feminine, or with the plural “city and sanctuary.” Keil says rightly that any reference except to the prince is very unnatural grammatically.

5. Most significant of all, the Hebrew word for end (*ketz*) never in 70 occurrences refers to *the destruction of a thing*. It refers to the *end of a period of time* and often to the end of the life, i.e. lifetime, of a person. Even in Daniel alone, 11:45 speaks of “his end,” meaning the end of the final ruler (an obvious parallel with our verse in 9:26). Daniel is told to go to the end (i.e., of his life) in Daniel 12:13. In addition the end of human life is one of the main meanings of *ketz* (Jer. 51:13: “your end” = end of your days; Lam. 4:18: “our end drew near” = our days were finished; Job 6:11: “my end” = end of my life; Ps. 39:4: “my end” = extent of my days; also Gen. 6:13: “the end of all flesh”).

6. *Brown Driver and Briggs Lexicon of the Hebrew Bible* renders *kitzo* as “his end” (p. 893).

7. Driver in his commentary (*Cambridge Bible for Schools*) renders “his end.”

8. The Jewish Publication Society translation has “his end.”

9. The RV of 1881 altered the mistranslation “end thereof” of the KJV to “his end,” putting the latter in the text.

10. We have an exact parallel in Daniel 11:45 where the final wicked person comes to “his end” (*ketz* occurs 15 times in Daniel).

I believe therefore that Keil and Moses Stuart are right when they say that the translation “its end,” i.e. the sanctuary’s end, is incorrect. The right translation, based on the immediate context (the antecedent is the prince) and the consistent meaning of *ketz* which never refers to the ruin or destruction of a thing, but the end of a period of *time* and especially the end of human life, is “he will come to his end [death].” Daniel 9:26 thus refers to a future antichrist.

I maintain with many commentators that Daniel 9:26b cannot be a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 since Titus, the leader of the attack,

did not come to “his end” in that event. But the evil ruler will come to “his end” (Dan. 11:45) in the holy land just before the resurrection (Dan. 12:2). Daniel describes a *future* antichrist figure.

For further confirmation I wrote to a distinguished Hebraist, under whose teaching I sat at the University of Jerusalem in 1970. Dr. Muraoka said, “Since the words ‘city and sanctuary’ are of mixed genders [one feminine and the other masculine] it would be difficult to know what the impersonal referent of the pronoun is. I think that the interpretation you propose [his end] is the most obvious.”

I note also the comment in *Lange’s Commentary on Daniel*: “The suffix in ‘his end’⁶ doubtless refers to the prince...The subject of ‘he shall confirm a covenant’ is beyond all question ‘the [evil] prince,’ which governs the preceding sentence as a logical subject, and is finally included in ‘his end,’ and is the prominent subject of consideration from verse 26b.”✧

Comments

“I am reading the booklet *What Happens When We Die?* It’s so easy and clear, so logical. I am so at peace now in myself about the truth, you cannot believe. I am still studying Greg Deuble’s book *They Never Told Me This in Church!* and enjoying it.” — *Australia*

“On my recent vacation I was sitting at the front of the tour bus talking to one couple about my forthcoming book *The Tyranny of the Trinity*. I felt someone pull at my pants leg and it was the tour guide, who handed me the microphone. Very nervously I began to address the tour group, holding up my book cover and telling them that my primary purpose in writing was to educate people. I gave them a brief synopsis of the book’s contents and informed them that many learned authors had assisted me in putting the book together. As I made my way back to the rear of the bus, I heard one man say, ‘Don’t listen to her — she is a heretic!’...It took a lot of courage for me to do what I did, and although I was so nervous I could hardly speak, it wasn’t for naught. At our ‘goodbye dinner,’ one from the tour group gave me his address and wanted a copy of my book, in addition to the two women who read Greg Deuble’s book...I don’t know if I am acceptable disciple material for Jesus, but if he wants people with enough courage to make fools of themselves, take a beating and keep on ticking — then perhaps I qualify.” — *Tennessee*

Anthony is heard on thebyteshow.com interviewed weekly by GeorgeAnn Hughes. You will also find there fascinating Bible conversations with pastors Greg Deuble, Sean Finnegan, Alex Hall, Chuck Jones and Dustin Smith.

⁶ Strangely, Lange thinks that “his end” means “the end inflicted by the prince” rather than his own death.