

# Focus on the Kingdom

Volume 9 No. 5

Anthony Buzzard, editor

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## 2007 Theological Conference Registration Deadline March 8

Please see information on pages 6-7.

## A Comparison of Islamic Eschatology with the Bible

by Ray Faircloth

This is a summary of some of the information provided in Joel Richardson's book *Antichrist: Islam's Awaited Messiah* where all quotations from Muslim sources may be found.

### The Islamic Revival

If trends remain fairly constant Islam will become the world's largest religion within 20 years. It is presently the fastest growing religion in the world at a rate of four times faster than Christianity. In the U.S.A the annual growth rate prior to 9/11 was 4%. Since then indicators are that it has risen to 8% with 85% coming from the African-American population. Islam is also the fastest growing religion in Europe.

### Islamic Literature

*The Quran* is composed of 114 chapters called Surahs.

*The Sunna* aids in giving proper understanding of the Quran. The Sunna is made up of two types of literature — the Haddith and the Sirat.

*Hadith literature* contains largely the Islamic beliefs about **the end times**. There are also many commentaries and modern-day writings about the subject.

### Basic Islamic Eschatology

*The minor signs* are similar to Jesus' reference to "the birth pangs," yet not as occurring before the Major Signs but taking place concurrently with the Major Signs.

*The major signs*. These all concern the Last Day and the coming of:

The Muslim Antichrist — *Ad-Dajjal*

The Muslim Jesus — *Isa Al-Maseeh*

The Muslim Messiah — *Al-Mahdi. The Guided One*. Shia Muslims refer to him as *Al-Mahdi al-Muntadhar. The Awaited One*.

**Al-Mahdi** will restore the Caliphate and the purity of the Islamic faith so that Islam becomes the standard for all nations, making a just world without oppression. He will be a descendant of Muhammad and of the descendants of Fatimah. When he returns he will become the final Caliph acting as vice-regent for Allah on earth and will lead a revolution to establish a new Islamic

world order. This will include multiple military campaigns (jihad) including the invasion of many non-Muslim countries.

The **white flag** — *Al-Liwaa* — is the flag of the Islamic state and of the leader of the Muslim army. The **black flag** — *Ar-Raya* — is the flag of jihad and is carried into battle.

When an army bearing black flags comes from the East from the area of Khorasan (in Iran) or from central Asia, then the appearance of the Mahdi is imminent. When he appears riding on a **white horse** (*literally or symbolically Muslims see the Mahdi as fulfilling the description of the rider on the white horse in Rev. 6*) he will lead the army to **re-conquer Israel. Jerusalem** will then be the location of the Caliphate and the center of Islamic rule. One particular hadith places the timing of this event when a final peace agreement is made between the Arabs and the Romans (interpreted as Christians) and mediated through a Jewish priest. This agreement is for **7 years**. He is described as having **supernatural power** over the wind and the rain and the earth, and flocks will be in abundance. In Antioch, he will discover certain scrolls of the Torah that he will use to convert Jews to Islam. Finally, he will discover the Ark of the Covenant in the Lake of Tiberius and install it in Jerusalem.

### Comparison of the Mahdi with the Biblical Antichrist

Christians who see the Scriptures as presenting the non-dispensational futurist view of prophecy will readily begin to see similarities between Islam's Messiah — the Mahdi — and the biblical Antichrist, who is described in the Scriptures in the following forms: The Beast, the abomination that causes desolation, the desolator, the man of lawlessness, the little horn, the Assyrian, the King of Babylon, the King of the North, and Gog.

Both the biblical and Islamic eschatologies paint a picture of one who is a political, military and religious world leader from the Middle East, one who will target first Jews to force conversion or destruction upon them in a final holocaust that takes place within Israel. Similarly, Christians will be targeted for the same purpose. The goal is a one-world Islamic religion.

### The Biblical Antichrist Attacks Jerusalem

Zechariah 14:2: "I will gather all nations to Jerusalem to fight against it; the city will be captured, the houses ransacked, and the women raped. Half the city will go into exile, but the rest of the people [who submit to Antichrist's rule] will not be taken from the city."

Also note Gog's attack (Ezek 38:9-12). Then the Antichrist exalts himself by setting himself up in God's temple (2 Thess 2:4), indicating that there will be a rebuilt Jewish temple in which he takes a position of authority. The counsel of Jesus now comes into play for Christians during this time (Matt. 24:15-22).

### **The Mahdi Attacks Jerusalem**

When black flag carrying armies arrive in Jerusalem from Khorasan (Iran) they set up their flags on the Dome of the Rock so that Jerusalem becomes the center of Islamic rule and all Jewish rule is abolished.

### **The Seven-Year Treaty**

Daniel 9:27: "He will confirm a covenant with the many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of a temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him."

The Mahdi makes Islam's fourth and final treaty with "the Romans" (Christians or the West) but it is made with a descendant of Aaron, i.e. a *Cohanim* or priest. This treaty is also for seven years.

### **Changing the Laws and the Times**

Daniel 7:25: "He will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change the set times and the laws. The saints will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time."

The Mahdi will change the law by instituting the Islamic Shariah law. He will change the times by imposing the mandatory observation of the Islamic Hijra calendar over all those who become subject to him. This will make the week run from Saturday to Thursday with Friday as the sacred day of prayer.

### **The Rider on the White Horse**

Revelation 6:2: "I looked, and behold, a white horse! And its rider had a bow, and a crown was given to him, and he came out conquering, and to conquer."

This is seen as a description of the Antichrist by those Christians who hold the non-dispensational futurist view. This rider is seen as imitating Jesus' ride on a white horse when he returns (Rev. 19:11). The bow is indicative of the false peace of his peace treaty.

Muslims note Revelation 6:2 and apply it to the Mahdi, as do Christians who hold the dispensationalist view of this rider as being the Messiah.

### **The Muslim Jesus**

The Muslim references in English to Jesus (usually called Isa, Hadrat Isa, Isa bin Maryam or Nabi Isa) are as one who is not "the Son of God," never died on the cross for mankind's sins, and is not a savior. He is merely a prophet who is subordinate to the Mahdi. In the last days his return will be close to a mosque in Damascus where he meets the army of the Mahdi. He is a radical Muslim whose primary purpose is to enforce the Shariah

law on all those who are subjugated and he will certainly attempt to force all Jews and Christians to convert to Islam on pain of death. In doing so he will have abolished Christianity and all religions so that Islam becomes the one-world religion. He destroys the Muslim Antichrist — the Dajjal — and all his Jewish followers. Further his time on earth is for only approximately 40 days during which time he marries and has children and then dies.

There are several distinct similarities to the Bible's description in Revelation 13:11-14 of the "false prophet" as a lamb with two horns, inasmuch as he deceptively appears to be like the real "Lamb of God" but is subordinate to the Antichrist and forces all to worship him and to be under their law "so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is the name of the beast" (Rev. 13:11).

### **The Dajjal: Islam's Antichrist**

The Dajjal is described in Muslim literature as being a deceiver who has miraculous powers, even being able to heal the sick. There is confusion over which eye he is blind in, but he has the word *kaafir*, meaning infidel, written between his eyes. He will claim to be Jesus Christ and be capable of traveling at great speeds on a giant mule which will take him to all parts of the world. Yet he will not be allowed to enter the cities of Mecca, Medina or Damascus which are the places in which Muslims are directed to seek refuge from the Dajjal. He will be followed by Jews, in particular women. He will defend Israel against the Mahdi and deceive Muslims into forsaking Islam. In the city of Lod in Palestine he will be killed by the Islamic Jesus. One can clearly see the parallels with the biblical Jesus.

### **The Revived Islamic Empire of the Antichrist**

Many Christians mistakenly anticipate a revived Roman empire. However all the nations that are noted in the Scriptures as last days enemies of Jews and Christians, that is, the many nations that attack Jerusalem (Zech. 14:2), are currently Islamic nations. These are noted in Psalm 83 and Ezekiel 38 (if it is proven that Gog is a figure for the Antichrist). Detailed studies of the nations of Ezekiel 38 reveal that the common belief that Russia is one of these nations is not correct. Also, rather than any European connection, Daniel 8:9 indicates that Antichrist will come out of the Middle East. These nations surrounding Jerusalem amount to ten nearby (Ps. 83) and eight at a relatively short distance, of which five occupy modern-day Turkey.

### **A Brief History**

In 395 AD the Roman empire was divided into a western section and an eastern Byzantine section. In 410 AD Rome fell to the Visigoths but, by having shifted its capital to Constantinople, the Roman empire continued until it finally fell to the Turks in 1453 AD. From this time on the Turkish Ottoman empire, which already had

control of Jerusalem from 637, became the next power of note until its end came in 1909. However, the Islamic Caliphate ruling that empire was not abolished until 1923, from which time the Islamic world is awaiting its restoration.

### **The Antichrist Spirit of Islam**

By its denial of the biblical Jesus as being God's Son and the true Messiah, Islam exhibits an antichrist spirit so that the Muslim version of Jesus is as just another prophet. Additionally, the denial of Jesus dying as the sacrificial lamb to cover mankind's sins is the very specific spirit of Antichrist that would be seen "in the last hour" (1 John 4:2 and 2 John 7-9), that is "those who do not abide in the teaching of the Christ." In Philippians 3:18 Paul speaks of those who "walk as enemies of the cross of Christ." This would include the Islamic teachers who deny that Jesus died for mankind.

### **Islam's Ancient Hatred for the Jews**

Because there has been a very long history of Arab hatred of Jews back through the time of Haman and even to Pharaoh, Islam has continued that hatred since its inception. This hatred is of a genocidal nature, whereby, although it is anticipated that Christians will in the last days convert to Islam, the non-converting Jews will all be destroyed. Islamic literature demonstrates this hatred often to the point of belief that the resurrection cannot begin until no Jews are left. Even zoo animals are said to have previously been Jews. Notably this ideological hatred of Jews is identical to that of 20<sup>th</sup>-century Nazism.

### **Islam's Practice of Beheading**

Revelation 20:4: "I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been **beheaded** because of **their testimony for Jesus** and because of the word of God. They had not worshipped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands."

John 16:2: "Indeed **the hour** is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God."

These are end-time scenarios indicating that a major way of persecuting and killing Christians will be by beheading, and that those who do it will be motivated by their religion. Such a religious system would have to think it was divinely appointed and have to be worldwide to fulfill these words.

Since the beginning of the new century there have been many reports of the beheading of foreigners and Christians by Islamic radicals in Saudi Arabia, Iraq and a few other countries. Is this practice actually officially approved by Islam? An examination of Islamic tradition and history shows that beheading is the very heritage of Islam. It is commanded in the Quran as a specific method of killing enemies and was the favored method of killing

by Muhammad and his followers. Many examples from throughout history are given in Richardson's book.

Again these aspects of Islam add to the picture that it fits the role of supporting the end-time antichrist, the Mahdi who fills the office of Caliph and therefore originates from within a Muslim country.

### **Islam's Goal of World Domination**

Many apologists for Islam try to play down this goal of world domination by saying that they are only reacting in self-defense rather than taking the offensive. The fact is that Islam views itself as the only true religion and all others must submit to the will of Allah, whether by persuasion or by force, and with the corollary of death for those who do not submit. One Islamic commentator stated that Muslims have a command from Allah to rule the entire world and to be over every nation. So they do indeed engage in offensive war to establish Allah's kingdom. Sadly and misleadingly the Western media so readily disseminates the apologists' attempt to hide the real Muslim agenda.

### **Jihad — Holy War**

Jihad means "striving." There are five forms of jihad in Islam. The one that concerns outsiders is called "Jihad al-kuffaar" (striving against the disbelievers). This means that Muslims are not just waiting for the Mahdi to reappear before they strive for global domination, but are obligated to daily striving for it regardless of the means. Indeed it is a religious duty that is well documented in Muslim literature that Muslims must physically fight against those who do not believe in Allah because warfare has been ordained for them.

The 1990 Muslim Manifesto said that "living in Britain or having British nationality by birth or naturalization does not absolve the Muslim from his or her duty to participate in Jihad."

Richardson's conclusion on this point is that what is called "the 'religion of peace' is responsible for over 90% of all fighting presently in the world...with the involvement of over 400 recognized terrorist groups."

### **The Use of Dishonesty and Deceit**

Islam is a religion that rationalizes and justifies lying and purposeful exaggerations in the interests of the defense and promotion of Islamic religion and culture.

### **The Doctrines of Kithman and Taqiya — Last Days Deception**

Kithman is a command to deliberately conceal one's religious beliefs and is mainly practiced by Shia' Muslims in order to mislead outsiders as to the true nature of Islam.

Taqiya is essentially the same as kithman and includes the idea that one will even deny one's religion if it serves to protect the Muslim. Both are used to justify the murder of an enemy of Islam or to gain prosperity. Deceptive tactics are used in attempts to polish the image

of Islam, making it more attractive to prospective converts. The Islamic general view is that “any end justifies the means.”

Matthew 24:24: “For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.”

2 Thessalonians 2:9-12: “The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked **deception for** those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that **they may believe what is false**, in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

### **Summary of Comparisons Between the Islamic and Biblical Narratives of the End Times**

**Bible: The Antichrist** is an unparalleled political, military and religious leader who will emerge in the last days.

Islam: **The Mahdi** is an unparalleled political, military and religious leader who will emerge in the last days.

**Bible: the False Prophet** is a secondary prominent figure who will emerge in the last days and support the Antichrist.

Islam: **the Muslim Jesus** is a secondary prominent figure who will emerge in the last days and support the Antichrist.

**Bible:** The Antichrist and the False Prophet together will have a powerful army that will do great damage to the earth in an effort to subdue every nation and dominate the world.

Islam: The Mahdi and the Muslim Jesus together will have a powerful army that will do great damage to the earth in an effort to subdue every nation and dominate the world.

**Bible:** the False Prophet is described essentially as a dragon in lamb’s clothing.

Islam: the Muslim Jesus literally comes bearing the name of the one the world knows as “The Lamb of God: Jesus Christ.” Yet the Muslim Jesus comes to murder those who do not submit to Islam.

**Bible:** The Antichrist and the False Prophet establish a new world order.

Islam: The Mahdi and the Muslim Jesus establish a new world order.

**Bible:** The Antichrist and the False Prophet institute new laws for the whole world.

Islam: The Mahdi and the Muslim Jesus will institute Shariah law for the whole world.

**Bible:** The Antichrist is said to change the times.

Islam: It is quite certain that if the Mahdi established Islam over all the earth, he would discontinue the use of Saturday and Sunday as the days of rest and have Friday

as the holy day of Islam. He might also replace the Gregorian calendar with the Islamic calendar.

**Bible:** The Antichrist and the False Prophet will attempt to institute a universal world religion.

Islam: The Mahdi and the Muslim Jesus will institute Islam as the only religion on earth.

**Bible:** The Antichrist and the False Prophet will execute anyone who does not submit to their religion.

Islam: The Mahdi and the Muslim Jesus will execute anyone who does not submit to Islam.

**Bible:** The Antichrist and the False Prophet will specifically use beheading as the primary means of execution for non-conformists.

Islam: The Mahdi and the Muslim Jesus will use the Islamic practice of beheading as the primary means of execution for non-conformists.

**Bible:** The Antichrist and the False Prophet will have a specific agenda to kill as many Jews as possible.

Islam: The Mahdi and the Muslim Jesus will have a specific agenda to kill as many Jews as possible until only a few are left in hiding.

**Bible:** The Antichrist and the False Prophet will attack to conquer and seize Jerusalem.

Islam: The Mahdi and the Muslim Jesus will attack, re-conquer and seize Jerusalem.

**Bible:** The Antichrist will set himself up in the Jewish temple as his seat of authority.

Islam: The Mahdi will establish the Islamic Caliphate from Jerusalem.

**Bible:** The False Prophet is said to do many miracles to deceive as many as possible into supporting the Antichrist.

Islam: The Mahdi himself is said to control the weather and the crops. His face is said to glow.

**Bible:** The Antichrist is described as riding on a white horse in Revelation 6.

Islam: The Mahdi is described as riding on a white horse in Revelation 6.

**Bible:** The Antichrist is said to make a peace treaty with Israel for seven years.

Islam: The Mahdi is said to make a peace treaty through a Jew (specifically a Levite) for seven years.

**Bible:** Jesus the Jewish Messiah will return to defend the Jews in Israel from a military attack by a vast coalition of nations led by the Antichrist and the False Prophet.

Islam: The Dajjal, the Islamic antichrist, will gain a great Jewish following and claim to be Jesus Christ and fight against the Mahdi and the Muslim Jesus.

**Bible:** The antichrist spirit denies that Jesus came in the flesh.

Islam: Islamic doctrine denies that God has a Son who died on the cross for mankind’s sins.

**Bible:** The primary warning given by Jesus and Paul was that of the abundance of deceit in the last days.

Islam: The practice of deceit is one of the tools of Islam to assist its own ascendancy. It has doctrines that call for deception to be used to achieve its desired goals.

**Bible:** The specific nations pictured in the Bible that are part of the final Antichrist empire are all Islamic nations.

Islam: All Muslims are commanded to give their allegiance to the Mahdi as the final Caliph and Imam (leader) of Islam.

**Bible:** The final Antichrist Empire will be from the Middle East.

Islam: The empire that succeeded the Roman/Byzantine empire was the Islamic Ottoman empire. Muslims expect a revival of such an Islamic empire centered in Jerusalem.

**Bible:** When Antichrist emerges there will already be some form of system in place that will be poised to receive him as a savior and to give him allegiance.

Islam: Islam is already the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest religion and will, at present growth rates, become the largest within a few decades. Islam is awaiting the Mahdi with an increasing measure of anticipation.

### **The Antichrist Himself Demands Worship**

Islam rejects the worship of any man. So how can we understand this apparent contradiction? A possible explanation might be that because of the deep spiritual state of deception that the total Islamic world leadership will be in, and the fact that they will have given their allegiance to the Mahdi at a stage many years prior to his announcement of being God, to deny him after this point would be the ultimate shame for Islam. Considering that he will have accomplished so many of Islam's goals it will be hard to deny him. In Revelation 13:4 he is acclaimed with the refrain, "Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?" He will have defeated Israel, established the Caliphate in Jerusalem, destroyed many of the Jews and largely converted the world to Islam.

However, no doubt, many individual Muslims will find the very idea of worshiping a man as God intolerable and will desert Islam in spite of the severe consequences. Nevertheless Satan will appear to have achieved his purposes.

With this last thought we must agree with Richardson that individual Muslims should not be treated as if they are the enemy. Many of these people are simply pawns in a system that they have been brought up in. They must be prayed for that they will see the real issues in the end-times.

For Christians to be prepared it will not be primarily about stockpiling food or finding a safe route of escape from one's city. Rather it is a matter of being spiritually

prepared so that one understands what is going on as things unfold in order to escape or avoid the worst of situations if possible and to be spiritually strong so as to endure that most difficult of all times. ✧

## **Jesus and the End of the Age**

Jesus certainly did not set a time limit for the coming of the Kingdom. On one occasion he spoke of his followers seeing the Kingdom before they died, and this prediction was fulfilled in the *vision* (Matt. 17:9) of the Kingdom. Peter explained later that the "transfiguration" event was a vision of the future Kingdom, the Coming or Parousia (2 Pet. 1:16-18). When Jesus spoke of "*this* generation" not passing before all the events of his prophetic discourse were fulfilled, he referred not to a period of 70 years, much less to a period of 40 years beginning in 1948! "Generation" (Mark 13:30) here has the sense of "present evil society," "brood" (cp. Prov. 30:11-14; Ps. 24:6, Luke 16:8), which will continue until Jesus introduces the future age of the Kingdom of God on earth. Jesus made it quite clear that fixing a time for the Kingdom is impossible. He stated that clearly in Mark 13:32 and Acts 1:7. The New Testament also speaks of the second coming "after a long time" (Matt. 25:19; Luke 20:9). The Day of the Lord is always "at hand," and we should be energetically preparing to enter the Kingdom. ✧

## **Comments**

For years, like most Christians in America, I grew up believing in the doctrine of the Trinity. And like most, I accepted this doctrine without any sort of examination of whether or not it was scriptural. Indeed, by my acceptance of this doctrine, my reading of Scripture was peppered with this *a priori* belief. It was really not until I was 22 that I seriously questioned the doctrine.

One can imagine my sleepless nights and anxious days when I first pondered such a disturbing — yet daring — question. I was too immature to say, "I will search for the truth." Instead, I said, "I will prove the Trinity is really found in Scripture." I started with Paul, knowing his were the earliest letters. I immediately rejected Romans 9:5 on grammatical grounds — and even if Paul called Jesus "God" that wouldn't prove much. Even in the Bible, people could be called "gods" and "son of God." Other passages went before me, but I quickly came to see how Paul took pains to distinguish between Jesus and God. Still, I went on believing this doctrine, expecting to somehow prove it.

This began in 2003. Over the next few years, I became acquainted with N.T. Wright and Jimmy Dunn, Larry Hurtado and the like, all Trinitarians. I read their works over and over again and asked them questions. It became increasingly clear from the former two that Jesus'

divinity was expressed in terms of function, not ontology. I resisted this at first, and subsequently buried myself in Wright's enormous tomes. But I always felt he oversimplified the evidence, as in Romans 10:13 in which he boldly equates Jesus with God.

It was in mid-2006 that my turnaround came. I went before God, humbled myself, and prayed, "Lord God, if you are a Trinity, you are such whether I grasp that or not; if you are not, you are such whether I grasp that or not." I felt that I should look at the evidence dispassionately, and not try to make the Bible say what I wanted it to say. I quickly came to the conclusion that the Trinity must not be a doctrine of saving faith since all the texts I examined were hardly unambiguous.

I began looking at Unitarian Universalist websites, but was repulsed by their lack of dedication to Christ; I found others that were much more Bible-based — people who were Christians, but were unitarians. Indeed, the more I studied the Bible, the more I — to my initial horror! — began to say that the idea of Jesus' being "God of God, true light of true light, of one essence with the Father" was monstrously incorrect! For once, the rug was truly pulled from my feet — I no longer knew who Christ was; the neat little box I had put him in was gone. And yet, I could hardly have suspected that he was desperately trying to teach me the truth about him.

Still not quite taking the plunge in full, I began reading classical Unitarian literature. In the surprising warmth of December 2006, I read the golden sermon by William Ellery Channing, "Unitarian Christianity." I literally jumped for joy when I first read it, for he said all I had been thinking recently! How bizarre it was to believe Jesus was one man with two natures! How bizarre that we believed in the Trinity, yet the idea that God is a threefold being is hardly found in the Bible! It was, to be cliché, like cold water to my soul. I read Mary Dana's touching letters, knowing I myself would soon be writing similar letters. I scoured this 19<sup>th</sup>-century literature, finding for the first time voices with whom I agreed. I was almost there.

Nevertheless, I did not wish to lessen the impact of Jesus. I could not think of him just as a great sage. I knew he must be lord of all, a position not given to mere "good guys." Praise God, a book about divine agency in second temple-era Judaism came my way, and things began to fall into place. Neil Richardson's *Paul's Language About God* likewise came to my attention (I had read it previously, but this time more open-mindedly). Even though the authors of these books were Trinitarians, they all admitted Paul himself clearly wasn't! To them, Jesus was not just a smart man who made a nice sacrifice for me: he was a man, like me, but who ascended to the right hand of his God and received His name — the office and status of lord (Phil. 2:9). He fulfilled prophecies about

God — he was the lord we called on for salvation (Rom. 10:13; cf. Joel 2:32) and he was the lord coming at the Day of the Lord (I Thess 5:2; cf. I Thess. 5:2). He exercises YHWH's unique lordship (1 Cor. 8:6). But now, in early 2007, I understood so clearly, and fell to my knees in such deep reverence, the glory of the true Christ — he does all these things not because he is the second person in a Trinity, but because he is God's AGENT, God's namesake in action. Like Joseph to Pharaoh, Jesus was to God. For the first time since that cool September day in 2003, I felt I had reached the Truth. That day in my journal, I wrote that I no longer confessed the Trinity, but that which seemed obvious to me after years of searching — the UNITY of God. And I confessed that Jesus is God's unique agent, but a man nonetheless: God in function, human in essence. The next day I went to my church, and stood before the high altar. I confessed, "For me, there is one God, the Father; and there is one Lord, Jesus Christ." I ceased being a Trinitarian, and embraced unitarianism. Praise be to the God and Father of our lord Jesus Christ!

But that was merely Paul; what of John? I read your article on this, "Caveat Lector," and this for me was the final piece of the puzzle. The "object" existing in your head does not truly exist, but only ideally (how I missed this same idea in Dunn's writings defeats me). This was what I felt was true of Jesus — he was preordained from eternity, but was created in the womb of Mary — to do and be for the world what only God can do and be. Yet he is not God, for God is ONE. He is a man who, by the appointment of God, is functionally divine. His God is my God, and no other.

Since, I have spent a lot of time on your and other websites, reading articles. I hope more people will do the same. I know first-hand that leaving the Trinitarian tradition can be difficult. Nevertheless, we must seek truth, and not tradition, for it is truth that sets us free. And if our faith is in Christ, we are truly secure.

— *Maryland*

## 2007 Theological Conference

March 29-April 1, 2007

Simpsonwood Conference Center, Norcross, GA

We want to extend a warm invitation to you to be with us March 29-April 1, 2007. 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 confirm and strengthen our grip on the great truths of Scripture. Perhaps for you the social dynamics which happen in between sessions will be the highlight. Many of the participants have newly discovered the Abrahamic faith and are excited to meet others of similar persuasion.

The new venue (see [www.simpsonwood.org](http://www.simpsonwood.org)) will provide many advantages in terms of the convenience of being all together at one location. No need for shuttles to a hotel. The conference is only as good as the combination of its participants allows. Please do not deprive us of the privilege of having *you* with us to encourage and embolden us in a hostile world.

Previously the cost of the conference was divided up between hotel and conference fee. This year room, meals, breaks, and conference fee are all included in one price: \$212 for a single, \$180 per person in a double room (including tax). See the cost comparison chart below to compare the cost of the 2006 conference with the 2007 conference. **The registration deadline is March 8.** Please register by phoning Atlanta Bible College at 800-347-4261 or 404-362-0052 or mail the form on the back page. The conference will begin with registration at 4:30 pm on Thursday, March 29 and end on Sunday afternoon.

For those flying into Atlanta, we will provide round-trip transportation between the airport and Simpsonwood at the most economical rate possible. Please indicate when you register that you will need airport transportation, and we will contact you regarding arrangements and fees. Driving directions are at [simpsonwood.org](http://simpsonwood.org).

Please do consider joining us. It is so important for us all to gather from time to time to celebrate our common faith.

#### Day Rates

For those not staying at Simpsonwood, the day rates are (including tax):

\$19 for one meal

\$32 for two meals

\$45 for three meals

Plus the conference fee of \$20 per person (\$10 per day, Friday and Saturday)

#### Intensive Course

Following the conference, Monday-Wednesday, April 2-4, Anthony Buzzard will teach "The Destiny of the Righteous." The course will be held at Simpsonwood, and the same costs apply for room and meals (\$64 per night for single). The course cost for credit is \$278; continuing education cost is \$139, plus \$14 for the textbook *Our Fathers Who Aren't in Heaven* by Anthony Buzzard. Please register with Atlanta Bible College at 800-347-4261 (404-362-0052).

#### Cost Comparison for Single

Last Conference	This Conference
3 nights @ \$75=\$225	3 nights @ \$60=\$180
Conf. fee = \$105	Conf. fee = \$20
Total: <b>\$330</b>	Total: <b>\$200*</b> (+airport trans.)

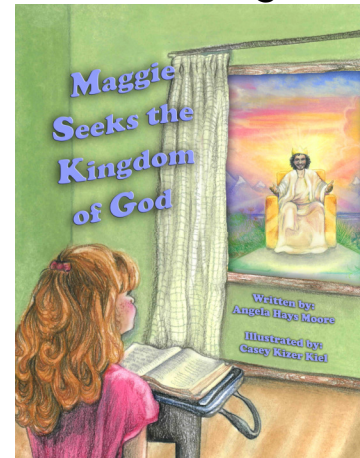
#### Cost Comparison for Couple

Last Conference	This Conference
3 nights @ \$75=\$225	3 nights @ \$100=\$300
Conf. fee (2x\$105)=\$210	Conf. fee (2x\$20)=\$40
Total: <b>\$435</b>	Total: <b>\$340*</b> (+airport trans.)

\*Plus 6% tax

Anthony is heard on [thebyteshow.com](http://thebyteshow.com) interviewed weekly by GeorgeAnn Hughes. At the site, click on **Library** in the left column to access the archived interviews. He is also seen at [youtube.com](http://youtube.com)

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