

Focus on the Kingdom

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Correction

My sincere apologies for the unintentional omission of the word “only” in the July edition of *Focus on the Kingdom*. On page 3, the left column and the end of the second paragraph, I spoke of the Gospel as not being about the death and resurrection of Jesus. I intended to say of course, not about “Jesus’ death and resurrection *only*.” The death and resurrection are of course absolutely central and essential elements of the Christian Gospel. But the Gospel has the Kingdom of God as its primary base (Mark 1:14-15; Luke 4:43 etc.). The death and resurrection make possible our future entry into the Kingdom (not “going to heaven”). Saving faith is directed both towards Jesus’ atoning death and his resurrection *and* the promise of the Kingdom of God coming to a renewed earth at the return of Jesus. Luke 8:12, Mark 4:11-12, Matthew 13:11 show us that **Jesus makes an intelligent understanding of the Kingdom of God a condition for successful repentance and forgiveness**. After all Jesus did come “**to give us an understanding**” of how to know God (1 John 5:20).

Show your friends these amazing verses. Unless we repent and accept the Kingdom as a little child, we will not enter it. So said Jesus in Luke 18:17. The teaching and preaching of **the Gospel** by Jesus, long before he said anything about his death and resurrection, must be the basis of Christian belief. Some fall for a trick of language, when they are told that we are to cling to Jesus rather than to what he preached! This is to introduce a dangerously misleading false alternative. There is no believing in Jesus apart from believing and obeying his words/teachings/Gospel.

Why don’t we all unite to agree on starting our Christianity where Jesus starts it? Why not thoroughly ponder Jesus’ opening salvo directed to us all: “Repent by believing the Gospel of the Kingdom” (Mark 1:14-15). Why not then go on (having defined “Kingdom”) to define God properly. For this turn to Jesus’ declaration that we are to “Listen and understand that God is one Lord” (Mark 12:29). Jesus did not affirm any Nicene Creed or Athanasian Creed. He affirmed the unitary, non-Trinitarian monotheistic creed of Israel (Mark 12:29). Try raising this issue in Sunday school or at any opportunity, and invite your friends to see how well they are compliant with Jesus’ two primary commands about believing the Gospel of the Kingdom and loving the God defined as the One Lord, not two or three Lords. ✧

The Miracle of the Internet

The miracle of the internet is rapidly developing into an ideal classroom for those of us who are used to doing “Bible” in a classroom setting and of course in church. Incidentally, church equally should be a classroom, with scope for interaction with the speaker (a proven way for maximum learning).

There is a developing blog at our 10-minute video at YouTube (“Jesus Is Still a Jew”). Do have a look at this when you have a moment. I am trying to make the unitarian and Gospel of the Kingdom of God point in an easy way. This has provoked some interesting response and I added the following comments there. These seem to me to focus the non-Trinitarian point most succinctly. I said (and you will have fun putting these points to your friends. The art of persuading is one which must be learned by frequent practice and “the heart of the righteous meditates on how to answer” Prov. 15:28):

Here is a gentle challenge: Jesus declared the Jewish unitarian creed, “God is one Lord,” in answer to the question about the most important command of all (Mark 12:28ff). Why then is that creed of Jesus not heard or recited in churches? In its place we find a complex Nicene Creed (325 AD): God as three Persons in one Essence. If we follow Jesus, would we not ensure that his unitarian creed is our creed? What has happened to create this gap between Jesus and what we claim as his churches? It would appear that we just bypassed Jesus at the most fundamental level of all, defining God.

Someone asked if this (“Jesus Is Still a Jew”) is an Arian view. It is not, since Arians think that Jesus began as a *non-human* person. But Luke and Matthew go to great lengths to explain the *origin* of Jesus. He is a descendant of Abraham and David. This is quite impossible if one is really older than Abraham and David!

The Messiah is not the real Messiah unless he is a blood-line descendant of David (2 Sam. 7:14). And since Jesus affirmed the unitarian creed of Israel we know he could not have been a Trinitarian.

A standard commentary on Mark 12:29 (*Word Biblical Commentary*) makes the astonishing and amazing statement that “Jesus’ affirmation of the Shema is neither remarkable nor specifically Christian.” What?? The teaching of Jesus is not Christian? This should alert us to a real problem.

The issue over who God is must be settled by Jesus. Jesus cites and approves the unitarian, non-Trinitarian creed of his heritage, agreeing entirely with a fellow Jew

(Mark 12:28ff). On what possible basis can churches afford to overrule this unitarian creed of the Master rabbi? By making the Nicene, Trinitarian creed the creed of Christendom, we show that we have abandoned Jesus for an “improved” creed. But we dare not “improve” on Jesus while claiming him as lord.

The single point of our “Jesus Is Still a Jew” is this: Christianity is the only religion which begins by discarding its own founder’s creed! Jesus urges us to listen to his teachings to be saved, yet we refuse the unitarian creed, belief in One God, the Father, as presented by Jesus in Mark 12:29. Has anyone noticed this amazing fact? ✧

The Begetting, Coming into Existence, of the Son of God

What does the word “beget” mean? Definitions are easy to come by. Just type the word into a search engine, or consult a dictionary anywhere. To beget is “to sire, to father, to bring into existence, to procreate, to generate.”

This word is crucial to our understanding of who Jesus, the Son of God, is. For centuries churches bearing the name of Christ argued over whether the Son had a beginning of existence or not. Of course there is a vast difference between a person who has no beginning and one who comes into existence, that is, has a *beginning* of existence.

So what does the Bible say about Jesus, the Son of God? The answer is very easy as long as one is able to process simple information and begin at the right place.

The place to start is in Matthew and Luke. Both these biblical writers major on the story of the begetting of Jesus. They thus inform us in detail of how and when the Son of God began to exist, was begotten, that is procreated.

Matthew 1:1 uses a noun related to begetting. It is the word “genesis.” It means of course beginning. Jesus’ family history is to be announced by Matthew. Jesus is introduced as being the descendant (son) of Abraham and the descendant of David. Is that clear? In Matthew 1:18 Matthew picks up the same word “genesis”: “The beginning, genesis, of Jesus was as follows...” Matthew focuses in on the beginning, procreation, begetting, coming into existence, origin of Jesus as the Son of God.

There is no possible doubt or ambiguity in these accounts of who Jesus is and how he began. The language is un-complex and of course was written to be understood! Matthew 1:20, two verses later, tells us more about this begetting of Jesus. Please note the slight “fudging” of the original Greek in some translations here. Your translation probably tells you that Joseph was reassured to learn that what Mary “conceived” in her womb was from the spirit of God. Actually the Greek is

more specific. It reads “what is begotten,” i.e., fathered, brought into existence, is from the spirit. Begetting is the work of a father.

In this crucial verse God had a Son, using His operational presence and power, His spirit, to procreate that Son. God in other words brought the Son into existence, caused him to exist — begat him.

Language has no clearer way of telling you that the Son of God was brought into existence by miracle in Mary. The Son was caused to be, generated, fathered, sired. Yes, of course Mary conceived a baby but the text (Matt. 1:20) tells us of the *Father’s* miraculous activity in begetting a Son.

Is this clear, and do you believe it? This account defines who the Son of God is. He is a procreated, generated, fathered person. God was his Father and this happened when a biological miracle was wrought in the womb of a young Jewess, probably about 16 years old.

None of this is the slightest bit difficult — until of course we listen to the words of the churches which make this matchlessly simple account into something quite different!

But before explaining what the church has done to make a simple account impossibly complex, let us see how beautifully Luke reinforces what we just learned from Matthew. In Luke Mary is visited by Gabriel, when Elizabeth was six months pregnant with John the Baptist. Once again the account is not complex. It was written by the historian and Bible expert Luke and designed to convey unambiguous information to promote and confirm the Christian faith.

The angel is addressing a sixteen-year-old. He intends to be understood! The angel begins with these words: “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. You will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus” (Lk. 1:30-31). Nothing difficult about this information. Then this: “He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father” (1:32). The baby to be conceived will be God’s Son. Now information about the destiny of this Son of God: “And he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end” (1:33). Next Mary’s very reasonable question: “But Mary said to the angel, ‘How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?’” (1:34). The reply of Gabriel, God’s messenger: “The holy spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God” (1:35).

The original Greek here gives us this: The child to be begotten, brought into existence, generated will be the Son of God. This repeats the information we found in Matthew 1:1, 18, 20.

We are at a crucial and defining moment with this easy explanation from Gabriel. The angel actually provides an *exact definition* of the title Son of God. It is rare that a Bible verse comes with its own built-in clarification. But here we have the Bible's perfect definition of "Son of God." Jesus is the Son of God precisely because of the miracle worked in Mary. "For this reason he will be the Son of God." The miraculous begetting and conception provides the simple reason for Jesus being the Son of God. He has no human father. He is the Son of God and God is his Father!

Alas, the Church overturned this crystal clear account of the origin of the Son of God. By 150 AD, 50 years later than the end of the New Testament period, that Son of God had been invested with a pre-history as Son. This meant that the words of Gabriel were derailed and disregarded. The reason for Jesus being the Son of God was no longer the miracle in Mary. The Son was given a "beginningless beginning," a so-called "eternal generation." These terms involved manipulating the meaning of the words "beget, originate, cause to exist." They were flatly contradicted, removed from the record and invested with non-meanings — meanings they nowhere else ever had! The conversation between Gabriel and Mary was frankly turned into nonsense, made incomprehensible.

Matthew and Luke present us with the true Son of God — a human being who is Son of God by supernatural divine procreation. Later church councils forced on the Church a Son of God whose origin was literally in eternity, by "eternal generation." The historical Son of God was buried under a strange tradition involving interference with simple words.

Listen to the telling, if rather understated, comment of a leading commentator on Luke 1:35. Ponder this amazing twist suffered by the easy words of Gabriel to Mary: "Later church tradition made something quite other out of this verse" (Fitzmyer, *Anchor Bible Commentary*). Justin Martyr believed that the spirit and power of God were God the Son preexisting his birth.

John Is Not to Be Pitted Against Matthew and Luke

It is most unwise to begin to contradict these lucid accounts of Matthew and Luke by setting John's gospel against them! John was fully aware of the accounts of Matthew and Luke and certainly did not imagine setting them aside.

John spoke of the eternal plan of God to procreate His unique Son. John spoke not of a "Word" (capitalized in our translations, with no authority for this in the original Greek!). John did not contradict Matthew and Luke by saying "In the beginning was the Son of God." He spoke rather of God's eternal purpose, His word, to bring into existence His uniquely begotten, i.e. fathered, sired, procreated Son. John is in complete agreement with

Matthew and Luke and Scripture is not thrown into confusion. The word, the promise of the Son, became the human being, Jesus the Son of God. John simply complements Luke's and Matthew's accounts. John is to be read in the light of Matthew and Luke and not twisted in a way which contradicts them. Luke 1:35 gives us an unqualified statement about the basis for which Jesus is the Son of God. It is because he was brought into existence supernaturally by the Father.

God is the Father of Jesus. Joseph is not his biological father, and Jesus is thus the Son of God.

We are dealing here with extremely simple concepts and words and there is no valid excuse for misunderstanding the easy language of begetting or generating. Does anyone stumble when he reads Proverbs 23:22: "Listen to your father who **begat** you, and despise not your mother when she is old"?

You and I came into existence when our fathers begat us. So according to Matthew and Luke did the Son of God. This makes him a real human being. The dissolving of the simple word "beget" into nonsense caused a completely erroneous creedal definition of the Son to arise. It was then uncritically accepted as true by billions!

Proverbs 23:23 counsels us to "Get the truth, and sell it not — wisdom, instruction and understanding." The next verse reads like this: "The father of a just man will exult with glee; he who **begets** a wise son will have joy in him." On what possible grounds could one misunderstand the word "beget"? Apply the same simplicity and honesty to Matthew 1:18, 20 and Luke 1:35 and you will have unlocked the secret to who the Son of God is, and the basis for calling him God's Son. There is no existence of the Son before his coming into existence. That really is not a hard concept. It is laid out for us at the beginning of our New Testaments and confirmed by the whole Bible. By the "beginning" of the New Testament everyone knows I mean Matthew. By the "genesis" (Matt. 1:1, 18) and begetting of the Son of God (Matt. 1:20; Luke 1:35), everyone can know with equal certainty that the Son of God was a procreated person. This event happened some 2000 years ago. Jesus is the man Messiah. There is no other true Messiah.

This precious information was derailed by the hopelessly confusing introduction of an alien meaning of "begetting." C.S. Lewis, saddled with trying to defend his church tradition, tells us that the begetting of the Son is comparable to two books leaning on each other. They have done this for eternity! But Lewis has butchered the word "beget." One book leaning on another does not tell us that one book "begat" or "generated" the other! The analogy is false and Matthew's and Luke's inspired theology is left in ruins. A return to the sane language of Matthew 1:1, 18, 20 and Luke 1:35 will bring real revival to Bible study and a unifying center for Christian faith.

“Theology” falsely so-called plunged the Church into confusion from the second century on and the church councils wrote in stone, with threats of excommunication for dissenters, the labored and confusing results of banning the actual meaning of “beget.” The origin of the Son of God is not in eternity but in the womb of his mother some 2000 years ago. That means that Jesus really is a human person, not an eternal God-Person with a generic humanity! Mary had a baby, and that son of David, and of Mary and of God is the Messiah, our Savior. ✧

The following article from a leading evangelical illustrates that confusion and complexity result from trying to shoe-horn Jesus into the Greek triune God creed which he did not believe.

Did the Old Testament Jews Believe in a Triune God?

John Piper, February 18, 2009

Did the Old Testament Jews believe in a triune God? Not with clarity.

I think we need the category of progressive revelation, which states that stage by stage in redemptive history, greater and greater clarity as to the nature and activity of God comes.

And with that category, No, I don't think that Old Testament Jews were clear about the nature of God in the way that we are clear with the incarnation and the teaching about the Holy Spirit that comes with Jesus.

However, having said that, I want to be careful not to deny that they believed in the triune God. Because they believed in the God of Jesus Christ. They believed in the true, living God as he was being revealed in special redemptive history, and that God was the triune God.

So they believed in the God who is the triune God. And there were hints along the way, such as, “Let us create man in our image” (Gen. 1:26). I know there are various ways to take that text — like as a royal plural or something — but it is still interesting. It's going to be provocative of a plurality in God.

And then the Spirit of God was real. And then there began to be a sense that the Messiah who was to come is no ordinary, mere man. There's more to it than that.

This is why Jesus, I think, made Psalm 110:1 his favorite psalm. He referred to it over and over and over again: “Whose son is the Messiah? And whose Lord is the Messiah?” And he drew out that he was more than a mere man.

So, Yes, they believed in the triune God. But, No, they did not have clarity that he was a triune God. That came progressively and with greatest clarity for us in the New Testament.

Psalm 110:1 defines Jesus by the non-Deity title adoni — not Adonai, the Lord God!

Acts 13:33

A key verse defining the beginning of Jesus has been obscured in the KJV by the addition of the word “again” which is not in the Greek text.

Let's start with a very important quotation from the celebrated F.F. Bruce. He is commenting on Acts 13:33, 34. Please open a Bible to this text.

“‘Raised up’ – that is by raising him up in the sense in which he raised David (v. 22). For *anistemi* in this sense, see 3:22; 7:37; 3:26 (‘raised him up and sent him’) [raise up and *then* send]. The promise of 13:23, the fulfillment of which is described in 13:33, has to do with the sending of the Messiah, **not his resurrection** (for which see v. 34). The addition of ‘from the dead’ in verse 34 differentiates this use of ‘raise up’ from its use in verse 33.”¹

Note the *de* (δε) in verse 34 which distinguishes the resurrection quote from the beginning of Jesus quote in verse 33. The KJV is mistranslated in verse 33 (cover-up!): “he hath raised up Jesus *again*.”

Note also the *Expositors Greek Testament*: “‘In that he raised up Jesus’ (RV, correcting KJV). This rendering is quite compatible with the view that the reference of the word here is *not to the resurrection* of Jesus as the Messiah, cp. 3:22, 7:37; Deut. 18:15. The first prophecy, verse 33, would be fulfilled in this way, while in verses 34, 35 the prophecy would be fulfilled by the resurrection from the dead. Wendt argues that Heb. 1:5 where the same prophecy is quoted as in verse 33 also refers to the raising up as the Messiah.”

*The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*² makes Hebrews 1:5, 6 all point to the same event, the beginning of Jesus. Thus “This day I have begotten you,” “I will be his Father,” and “when he brings the firstborn into the world” all describe the same event.

Treffry, *Eternal Sonship of the Lord Jesus Christ*³ on Psalm 2:7:

“This passage occurs four times in the Scriptures, three times cited in the NT: Acts 13:33; Hebrews 1:5 and 5:5. Hence we are assured of its importance and significance and equally of its impressiveness, which last of course must depend on the clearness with which it enunciates the truth and the consequent facility with which its meaning would be apprehended. It cannot therefore be obscure or enigmatic, nor can its sense be remote or recondite uncertain or ambiguous [so Ps. 110:1]. A text possessing these characteristics would not be quoted so often, especially as is the fact, without an accompanying explanation.

¹ F.F. Bruce, *Acts of Apostles, Comm. on Greek text.*

² Vol. 6, p. 880, fn. 58.

³ London, 1849, pp. 281-285.

“2. A second remark, still more obviously true, is that in its proper sense, it must be appropriate to each discourse in which it appears. Hence of several interpretations the one to be preferred is the one which is most fully adapted to the whole; while, on the other hand, such as are limited in their aptness to but one example of citation are strongly to be suspected, if not summarily dismissed.

“3. A third circumstance, not to be wholly passed over, is that in every instance the passage is addressed to Jews. Its exposition therefore must be conducted on the acknowledged principles of Jewish theology [this applies whether addressed to Jews or others]. No sense which would not be appreciated by a Jewish reader can be other than incorrect.

“These rules, it is presumed, are so evident as not to demand formal proof, and if duly regarded will save much useless labor...

“Is it supposable that by *generation* the holy spirit merely meant *appointment*; and that the phrase ‘I have begotten you,’ signifies only ‘I have constituted you’? The ideas of generation and appointment are wholly dissimilar; and with the utmost latitude of figure, it seems impossible to understand how the one can be designed to convey the other. Nor is this the only objection which the phraseology of the passage suggests. For if it is a prophecy merely derivative of the Messiahship, the term ‘today’ will signify the day of the actual consecration of our Lord by the anointing of the spirit. But this is at variance with the fact, for, before that event, it will on all hands be admitted that he was the Son of God. [Yes, but how long before?]

“This exposition is prohibited also by the second of the above rules. Not to go further it is altogether inapposite, for example, to the discourse before us. The apostle has to prove the superiority of Christ to the angels; and in order to do this, he is supposed to quote the declaration of Yahweh, ‘You are the Messiah; this day I have appointed you that office.’ But this proves nothing, except that the Messiah was a divinely commissioned person, which of course no Jew would ever question.

“Nothing then seems more evident than that the passage under consideration cannot describe the designation of our Redeemer in his office and work. This opinion does not in any aspect possess the smallest plausibility and may therefore be decisively dismissed.

“Other expositors represent the passage as a prophecy of the resurrection of Christ; an interpretation which makes God the father and the earth or the grave the mother of our Lord. Apart from every other objection, the harshness and offensiveness of such a figure would, it is apprehended, be conclusive against the opinion. But a not less palpable reason for its rejection is that it supposes Christ to have become the Son of God at the resurrection,

which is not the fact. Or to have become so in some peculiar and eminent sense, which as we have before shown, is equally untenable. Every expression in the NT which gives emphasis to the divine Sonship refers to a period *before* the resurrection.

“There are two other expositions of the passage. In both it is referred to the divine filiation; and our preference, on whichever side it may be, will not therefore affect the main point of our enquiry. Of these, the first supposes the immediate object of the oracle to be the resurrection, considered as the evidence or *declaration* that Christ was truly, and in a proper sense the Son of God. In this case, according to an allowable Hebraism, the passage will signify ‘You are my Son; this day [of the resurrection] I have declared [and by indubitable evidence demonstrated] your [proper and divine sonship].’ With the second opinion, the passage generally is explained, according to its *literal* sense, as an absolute affirmation of our Lord’s divine and real Sonship. And unless there is some weighty reason for preferring the more remote [and less literal] sense, no doubt can be entertained that the second opinion is to be preferred.

“The only reason for the *declarative* sense is found in a part of Paul’s discourse at Antioch in Pisidia, recorded in Acts 13:16ff. The passage supposed to favor the declarative view is as follows: ‘And we declare to you glad tidings, how the promise which was made to the fathers, God has fulfilled the same to us their children, in that *he raised up Jesus again*, as it is also written in the second psalm, “You are my Son, this day I have begotten you.” And as concerning the fact that he raised him from the dead, never again to return to corruption, he spoke in this way “I will give you the sure mercies of David.” Therefore he says in another psalm: “You will not allow your holy one to see corruption.”’ (vv. 32-35). Here then it is supposed that the fulfillment of the prophecy is distinctly referred to our lord’s resurrection.

“But this may be rationally doubted. **The word *again* (v. 33) has been inserted by our translators without any sufficient warrant**, while the participle, *anastesas*, raised up, does by no means necessarily suggest the resurrection. In fact when the verb does have the sense of resurrection, it is usually connected with some determining phrase, such as ‘from the dead.’ Otherwise its meaning simply is to raise up, or passively to be raised up. This is the general, if not the invariable usage throughout Luke’s narrative. For example see Acts 3:22, 26; 5:6, 17, 34, etc. More particularly, Peter, in his discourse on the day of Pentecost, speaks of God having promised to raise up Christ (*anastesein*) to sit on the throne of David (Acts 2:30). So also in the prediction of the great prophet (Deut. 18:15, 18) the word is twice employed with the same purpose by the LXX and this passage is quoted by the same Apostle on another

occasion (Acts 3:22). In these examples the reference is obviously NOT to the resurrection, but to the natural production and the official elevation of Christ.

“Throughout the whole of the discourse in the synagogue at Antioch, in the use of this and the synonymous word *egeire*, the Apostle maintains a clear distinction to the same effect. Thus Acts 13:22: ‘He raised up David.’ Verse 23: ‘Of this man’s seed God raised up Jesus.’ Verse 30: ‘But God raised him *from the dead*.’ Verse 33-34: ‘God has fulfilled his promise in that he raised up Jesus...And as for the fact that he raised him FROM THE DEAD, no more to return to corruption, he said...’ In the latter examples there seems an emphatic contrast between the natural production or official appointment and the resurrection *from the dead*. This is intimated in the particles at the beginning of v. 34, as well as in the other peculiarities of its structure. Had the allusion in this and the preceding verse been the same, the words ‘*from the dead*,’ if not inserted in each (vv. 33 and 34) would at least have occurred in the former, their omission in the latter not being of so great importance to the sense. The fact, however, is directly the reverse. The legitimate conclusion, therefore, seems to be that the Apostle begins to speak of the resurrection in the 34th verse and not in verse 33.

“There is yet one other consideration which I apprehend may be regarded as decisive against the alleged reference to the resurrection. It is that the divine promise here referred to is explained in verse 23 as fulfilled in raising up Jesus, not from the dead, but of the seed of David. ‘The promise made to the fathers,’ says Outrein, ‘God did not fulfill in the first place and principally by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, but by sending him in the flesh and by appointing him to the various functions required of him.’

“It may be added that the introduction of the doctrine of the resurrection renders the divine oracle under consideration less appropriate than it otherwise would be to the passages where it occurs. Such an allusion does not happily harmonize with the magnificence of the 2nd psalm. It affords no proof of Jesus’ superiority to angels, but tends rather to a contrary conclusion...On the whole therefore it may fairly be doubted whether exists any valid evidence in favor of the declarative sense of the passage before us. And hence we have no alternative but to explain it according to its literal acceptance, as an absolute affirmation of the divine Sonship of Christ. That this is the exposition which would most readily occur to the Jew, is too evident to require any detailed proof.”

Treffry wrote as a Trinitarian, and while he agrees with us on this point, he goes on to speak of an “eternal day” and an “emanitive [eternally generated] production”! ✧

Replacement Theology

So-called “Replacement Theology” is *not* wrong *provided that* one takes into account God’s own exceedingly important proviso as detailed by Paul in Romans 11. Paul tells us there that God sees a future for a collectively converted remnant of all Israel (meaning in this case Israelites, whom today we call Jews).

But Jesus expressly said that unbelieving Jews, those who rejected him as Messiah and continue to do so today, would have the Kingdom of God removed from them and that the Kingdom would be given to a nation bringing forth the fruit of the Kingdom. That is indeed a replacement of one group by another. *In that sense* replacement is biblical, as based on the words of Jesus (Matt. 21). But if any form of “replacement theology” sees **no further place for the present physical and national Israel at all, ever** (as Paul very clearly does in Rom. 11), then replacement theology is in error. Nevertheless, we must not throw away the obvious biblical teaching **that true New Covenant Christians now become spiritual Jews and the Old Testament focus on Israel turns into a New Covenant focus on the international spiritual Israel** — the international Church (“the Israel of God,” Gal. 6:16: those who belong to the commonwealth of Israel in Eph. 2:12-20). In the Church there is no national Jew or Gentile, but all are one in Christ. “If you are Christians, then you are Abraham’s seed” (Gal. 3:29: a group which in Old Covenant times meant only the physical descendants of Abraham). The *national*, now largely unbelieving Israel of the Old Covenant has been replaced by the international Israel of God under the New Covenant, in which ethnic identity in the natural sense does not count.

Again, “If you are Christians, then you are the seed of Abraham” is the core truth of the New Covenant Church. This means that it is quite unbiblical to apply the blessing/cursing passage in Genesis 12:1-3 to unconverted Jews today! The point is a simple one: “He who blesses you will be blessed and he who curses you will be cursed” applies now, in view of Galatians 3:29 just cited, to the international Church! A gigantic misunderstanding has been built on a false premise here. Genesis 12 has been taken to refer today to the issue of approving and assisting Jews in the Middle East. We all hope for the best for all Middle Eastern nations and indeed every nation on earth. We pray for the peace of Jerusalem. But to use Genesis 12:1-3 as a justification for present political policy to Israel is quite wrong. Paul has defined the seed of Abraham in Galatians 3:29. He does not mean Jews who have not accepted Jesus as Messiah.

Of course, Jews, as well as anyone else, are free to accept the true Jesus Messiah at any time. Paul went out to save as many as he could in his day. Yet he described

Israel as a group as currently “enemies of the Gospel” (Rom. 11:28). They had killed their Messiah, not accepted him. But Paul clearly affirmed the vast quantity of prophecy which promises a collective conversion of the nation of Israel at the second coming, when as a group, at least a remnant (Mic. 2:12) will welcome Jesus, the Messiah who “comes in the name of the Lord God” (Matt. 23:39). ✧

Comments

“I am reading your material on the Kingdom, life after death, the Trinity, etc and I’m being blessed abundantly by it. It’s like I have just had my eyes opened. All those years and I *never* saw the Kingdom in that light before. I can’t stop reading. I have always enjoyed books since being saved over 20 years ago, but this hunger is unquenchable. I wish I was born an octopus, then I could read eight books at once! Church history and historical theology are my favourite subjects. I got started on those subjects a couple of years ago and have also had my eyes opened by it...big time! My family were very big in the Presbyterian tradition in Ulster. They built churches (buildings) and penned the Ulster Covenant which was signed in blood by hundreds of thousands at the start of the 1900s. The Father then led me to look at Calvinism, and it’s true that its background is in Augustine, and his background Manichaeism and Gnosticism. The confidence to leave behind all I believed in came one day when I was down praying near the barns, and I asked the Father, concerning the whole Church scene, ‘Father, is it worse than what I think?’ Immediately the reply was, ‘Yes, Mark.’ Those words were so real to me Anthony that they still echo in my heart today. And I knew things were bad concerning what people call Church. I knew we were miles from what the Father desires for us, but when the Father acknowledged that it was even worse than what I thought, then I felt free to check out everything we call truth in Protestantism. I have loved this journey, and I believe this is my time to learn, then of course share with others the truths I have found. Keep up the good work and say hello to everyone.” — *Northern Ireland*

“I just wanted to say thank you once again for your newsletter. I read through it every month and continue to gain insight into the person of God and his plan. I appreciate honest, zealous workers in the field. Thank you for all of your efforts.” — *Tennessee*

“Let me start off by saying my husband and I agree 100% with you about the Trinity and about ‘Hell.’ I loved your analogy about the two books, and telling someone, ‘But they are really only *one* book.’ I was raised Southern Baptist in Texas and had that falsehood from the lips of Satan shoved down my throat my whole life, but it never made an ounce of sense to me. Then when I met my precious husband, he and I discussed it,

and I found out he also didn’t believe in the Trinity and eternal Hell. Here are some things debunking the Trinity that we discussed:

1. Elohim (Father, Yahweh) is Spirit, and we must worship Him in Spirit and in truth. Spirits cannot die; they are eternal (except Satan and his minions when they are totally destroyed in the future). If Yeshua is God, how was he able to die? And while he was in the grave, who took care of everything?

2. Was Yeshua not speaking the truth when he said that the Father who sent him is greater than he? Or that no one is good except his Father? Of course proponents of the Trinity will say that these statements were made when he was in his ‘assumed human’ form, even though the Bible never says that.

3. The first commandment is thou shalt have no other Elohim before Him, a single Person. Has that commandment changed?

4. Yeshua himself said that the greatest commandment of all is thou shalt love Yahweh (One Person) your Elohim with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. He was telling us the Truth.

5. Most importantly: If the Trinity were a fact, don’t you think our Father would have considered it important enough to make it clear in His Word? Can you find even one certain Scripture that calls Yeshua ‘God the Son’ rather than the Son of God?

These are just some of the *many* points disproving the Trinity. I’ve tried telling friends, but they will disagree with me until the cows come home —though none of them seem to come up with solid biblical reasons *why* they believe in the Trinity, without adding their spin to the simple texts.

And you know what, Anthony? It makes me positively ill in my spirit to hear someone call Yeshua God. I love Yeshua with every fiber of my being, and thank him daily for suffering and dying in my place, but that wouldn’t have happened if the Father hadn’t sent him in the first place! And I’m sure Yeshua hates that, too! Keep up the good work, brother!” — *from email*

“A few weeks ago I had the pleasure of sharing the day with someone I met via your site, and we were surprised to see that we are only about 2 hours drive apart. We had such a great day! He brought books that he had read for me to read, and went home with some of mine — including some of your books that he had not read yet. We talked so much about the Kingdom that I lost my voice for a while afterwards.” — *South Africa*

One God Conference – Europe

Fri. Oct. 29 – Sun. Oct. 31, 2010

Warmsroth, near Frankfurt, Germany

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