

Focus on the Kingdom

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Anthony Buzzard, editor

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Defining the Kingdom of God in Matthew (cont.)

In our last issue we suggested that an intelligent response to the Gospel as Jesus preached it — the Gospel of the Kingdom — requires a grasp of Jesus' famous phrase "Kingdom of God." The Messiah opened his public ministry with a dual command:

"Repent [undergo a complete reorientation in thinking and in conduct] and *believe* in the Gospel about the Kingdom of God" (Mark 1:14, 15). The Greek may also be rendered "*Believe the Gospel* [about the Kingdom]". This is where the Christian faith, according to its pioneer exponent, Jesus, begins. Mark gives us, as do the other gospel writers, a summary, programmatic statement of the essence of what Jesus was about. His entire career was devoted to the propagation of the Gospel Message about the Kingdom. The Gospel of Kingdom of God is the quintessential saving Message, authored by the Savior himself.

It would be reasonable to expect Christian ministries today to give clear evidence of their genuineness. A certain proof that they are following in the footsteps of Jesus would be their clarion call for "repentance and belief in the Gospel of the Kingdom."

The facts, however are alarmingly different. The phrase "Gospel of the Kingdom" has been almost entirely removed from circulation. Listen carefully to gospel preaching as it bombards the American public. Jesus' famous phrase "Gospel about the Kingdom of God" is strangely absent. This fact calls for an urgent investigation among those who are keen to have the Savior's words both in the public forum and as the driving force of their lives (I Thess. 2:13).

Matthew wrote his Gospel to document the work of the historical Jesus and thus to set the standard of Christian preaching. He presents these fundamental facts: John the Baptist came announcing the Kingdom of

Heaven (=Kingdom of God) (Matt. 3:2). What did John mean by the Kingdom? The answer is given in Matthew 3:7-10. Repentance, John said, is in view of the coming Kingdom. The Kingdom is both threat and promise. It brings the threat of the "wrath to come" (v. 7), of being "cast into the fire," "burned up life chaff in unquenchable fire" (vv. 10, 12), or the promise of being gathered like "wheat into the barn" (v. 12). The coming of the Kingdom, which is near, *not yet here*, means the coming of judgment and reward.

The Kingdom of God is thus established in our thinking as the objective of Christian faith. It is positively not, in these passages, a "rule in human hearts." Nor is it a synonym for the church. It is the great cataclysmic event of the future: The Kingdom is parallel to the wrath *to come* (v. 7). None of this, of course, was in any way unclear to a first-century student of the Scriptures, since the Kingdom was the hoped-for liberation of Israel from foreign domination as well as the hope of peace for all nations under Messiah's worldwide empire (the Kingdom of God). The Kingdom of God was already known as the empire of Israel. Solomon had indeed sat on *the throne of the Kingdom of God* over Israel (I Chron. 28:5). The faithful in Israel, following the teaching of their prophets, were unitedly looking forward to that restored throne in Israel (cp. Luke 24:21; Acts 1:6) and the presence there of the Messiah as the legitimate royal ruler for God on earth. It is repentance and commitment to *that great fact* of the divine Plan which John urged in the Gospel of the Kingdom.

Matthew gives Jesus' message an identical label. Nothing could be clearer than the fundamental thrust

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of Jesus' Gospel described by Matthew 4:17, 23: "From that time Jesus began to proclaim his Message and say: 'The Kingdom of Heaven [equivalent to the Kingdom of God] is at hand.'... And Jesus went all over Galilee proclaiming as a herald the Gospel about the Kingdom and healing all kinds of sickness."

With the Kingdom defined as the future intervention of God to establish peace on earth and punish the wicked, the heart of the Gospel is clear. Jesus offers the promise of reward and life in the Kingdom, and threatens extinction, like chaff in the fire, to those who fail to pay attention to his Gospel.

The entire New Testament provides a commentary on this basic, simple thesis. As we saw in our last issue the Kingdom is a main priority in prayer. We are to pray "May your [God's] Kingdom *come!*" (echoed exactly in "May our Lord *come!*" and "Lord Jesus, *come!*" — I Cor 16:22, Rev. 22:20. Note that the last text makes the coming Kingdom the subject of the final biblical request). The well-known petition of the Lord's prayer marks the Kingdom as the desired event *of the future*. One does not pray for the Kingdom to come, if it has already come. The Kingdom is therefore the object of Christian hope. This fact is demonstrably true of other famous sayings of Jesus: "Enter by the narrow gate...Few find the way to life...Beware of false religious teachers...It is not everyone who says 'lord, lord' to me, who will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but the one who carries out the will of my Father...Many will say to me *in that day...*" (Matt. 7:13-15, 21, 22). "*That day*" will be the great occasion for rejection from or acceptance into the Kingdom of God. Once again the Kingdom is *the* event of the future for which we should prepare with urgency. It will be at that future time that "many will come from the East and the West and will recline with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matt. 8:11). At the same time the "children of the Kingdom" (those who by being privileged Israelites ought to have qualified for entry into the Kingdom, yet they tragically refused their own Messiah) will be rejected from the bright lights of the banquet hall and hurled into outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth — a picture of awful remorse and despair.

The career of Jesus was wholly devoted to the proclamation of the Father's Gospel of the Kingdom. Matthew 9:35 repeats 4:23: "Jesus went to all the

cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and heralding (preaching, KJV) the Gospel of the Kingdom." All biblical "*preaching*" refers to *preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God*.

Christian discipleship means learning the Gospel as Jesus preached it and taking it to the public: "As you go, preach [herald], saying, 'The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand'" (Matt. 10:7). We have here the obvious fact that Christianity entails following Jesus *by preaching his Gospel*, the germ of what was later given by the risen Jesus as the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19, 20). The proclamation of the Kingdom will continue right up until the day of the arrival of Jesus in his Kingdom, as Jesus made clear in a fascinating observation in Matthew 10:23: "You will not have gone over the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes." The Messiah here foresees an end-time ministry on behalf of the Gospel of the Kingdom in the land of Israel. But the Great Commission mandates the preaching of the same Christian Gospel of the Kingdom to *all the nations* of the world (Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20). Those who receive such proponents of the Kingdom Gospel receive Jesus himself (Matt. 10:40) who commissions them. "Accepting Jesus," then, must be rooted in its biblical context. It means accepting Jesus' proclamation about the Kingdom of God. The Gospel, therefore, is an eschatological matter. This is to say that it puts before us *the great fact of the future and demands that we believe it*. God speaks to the present from the future, laying before us His ultimate Plan and inviting us for our own good and our psychological and spiritual well-being to attune ourselves to God's world-scheme being worked out through Jesus.

Even the well-known petition "Hallowed be Your Name" is a cry for the future revelation of the Kingdom. Ezekiel had written of the time coming when God will be vindicated among the nations worldwide: "I will vindicate the holiness of *My great Name*, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you [Israelites] have profaned among them; and the nations will know that I am the Lord, says the Lord God, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes" (Ezek. 36:23).

Throughout the ministry of Jesus members of the public approached him seeking information about how they could "inherit the Kingdom of God" (no one asked Jesus about how they could "go to heaven when they die"). Common to Jesus and his audience

was the notion that the Kingdom of God was the objective of the Christian life. Entry into it or exclusion from it were the two options to be faced by those who heard Jesus preach. The decision to permit or refuse entry would be made at the Second Coming of Jesus (the *Parousia*). This is the constant scheme underlying the teaching of Jesus. That this is unclear to many churchgoers is due to our persistent use of a contradictory scheme. Our unbiblical tradition interferes with and muddles the teaching of Jesus in two ways. Firstly, it substitutes “Heaven” for “Kingdom of God” as the objective of the faithful. Deeply ingrained in churchgoers language is the conviction that “heaven” is the Christian goal. Jesus said otherwise. He promised “the earth” and the Kingdom of God to his followers (Matt. 5:5; cp. Rev 5:10). Secondly *the time* at which the promised reward is reached has been altered by popular language. It is ingrained in the minds of churchgoers that *immediately upon his or her death* the goal of faith will be reached. Such an idea, cherished as it is, produces a very considerable confusion when it is imposed on the Bible. The Bible knows only of the future resurrection at the Coming of Jesus as the “point of arrival” for Christians. *According to the testimony of Scripture, there is no way out of death except by resurrection of the whole man, an event which will involve all the faithful of all the ages in one community resurrection destined to occur, not at the individual’s death, but only when Jesus returns visibly to inaugurate his Kingdom on the earth* (I Cor 15:23; Rev. 11:15-18; Dan 12:2).

Reception of the Gospel of the Kingdom in the New Testament involves also a joyful response to the *function* which is offered to believers who will enter the Kingdom when it comes. The function of the believers is nothing less than the ultimate point of God’s covenant with man. Man was instructed from the beginning to take charge of the earth as God’s vice-regent. That purpose, hitherto frustrated by sin and the Devil, will come to fulfillment when the world is under the supervision of Jesus and the saints. The point of the whole Christian struggle for the Kingdom of God is beautifully laid out by Jesus at the last supper. Here, once again, Jesus confirms that the Kingdom will arrive with the future arrival of himself in glory. It will be then that “those who have followed me, will be promoted to take their seats on twelve thrones, to administer the [regathered] twelve

tribes of Israel...Just as my Father has covenanted with me to give me the Kingdom, so I now covenant with you to give you the Kingdom.”(Luke 22:28-30). “Don’t be timid, little flock, it is your Father’s good pleasure *to give you the Kingdom*” (Luke 12:32). This promise of kingship in the Kingdom is an essential part of what it means to receive the Gospel of the Kingdom. Paul treated this information about the future function of Christians as basic information about the faith. He was not a little disturbed that the Corinthians had forgotten the purpose for which God had called them to salvation, which was more than the forgiveness of past sin: “Don’t you know that the saints are going to manage the world? And if the world is to come under your jurisdiction, are you incompetent to settle trifling matters in the church?” (see I Cor 6:2, Moffatt).

Vague promises of a disembodied life (without a brain, or eyes or ears, which are part of the body?) in “heaven” are an exceedingly poor substitute for the hope which beat in the heart of Jesus, and which drove his mission — that of forming around him a team of co-workers and co-rulers for his Father’s coming Kingdom on earth (Rev. 5:10; Matt. 5:5). ✧

Responses

“I started listening to your program from my hospital bed one day. I was searching for the voice of America when I heard your voice from World Harvest Radio. Praise God! Because of my condition after an auto crash in which I lost a leg I always feel bad and sad as my future looked bleak. But each time I listen to your program I feel comforted and hope that God will one day help me to overcome my problems.” — Nigeria

“I do enjoy your everyday broadcast from South Bend, Indiana. It is blessing my soul each moment. Please keep the radio program going.” — Nigeria

“I’ve been using your six lessons on the Kingdom of God as my manual for home Bible studies. Our group is attentive and responsive to hearing the message of the Kingdom.” — Mindanao, Philippines

“SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND UNTIL...” (Psalm 110:1)

by Allon Maxwell (allonmax@werple.mira.net.au)

Editor's note: In our first issue (Oct. 98) we pointed to the immense importance of Psalm 110:1, properly understood, as the key to the relationship of Jesus to the One God of Israel. This subject has attracted the attention also of a friend in Australia who lays out the following invaluable facts. Psalm 110:1 is the New Testament's favorite quotation from the Old Testament. This alone makes it worthy of our closest study. It is indeed, as the text says, an inspired oracle from the One God addressed to the Lord Messiah.

“The LORD said to my lord, Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.”

This Old Testament verse, from Psalm 110:1, is quoted in the New Testament no less than 23 times!¹ The Messianic significance attached to it by the New Testament writers demands our attention.

It is unfortunate that the translators of the KJV clouded the meaning of David's words by assigning an upper case “L” to that second “lord” in the verse. This “lapse” has unfortunate complications for those who are unable to read the Hebrew text themselves. It fails to follow the normally expected “translators' convention” which uses an upper case “L” to distinguish between two quite different Hebrew words, one of which **always** refers to God, and the other of which **never** refers to God.

The error has been perpetuated by some later versions (NKJV, NASB, NIV), but has been recognized and corrected by several others (RSV, NRSV, NEB).

That upper case “L” has led many to misuse the verse as a Trinitarian “proof text.” However, as we shall see, that is not the intention of the verse at all.

¹ Psalm 110:1 is quoted by: Jesus (Matt. 22:44; 26:64; Mark 12:36; 14:62; 16:19; Luke 20:42, 43; 22:69; Rev 3:21); Peter (Acts 2:33; 2:34, 35; 5:31; I Pet. 3:22); Stephen (Acts 7:55-56); Paul (Rom 8:34; I Cor. 15:25; Eph 1:20; 2:6; Col 3:1; Heb 1:3; 1:13; 8:1; 10:12-13; 12:2).

MORE ABOUT THAT “TRANSLATORS' ERROR”

In our English Bibles, the same word “lord” translates several distinct Hebrew words. A long established “translators' convention” uses different combinations of upper and lower case letters (“LORD,” “Lord,” and “lord”) to differentiate between the original Hebrew words.

When we see “Lord” written with an upper case “L,” those of us who don't read Hebrew rely on the established convention that it is, most often, a translation of “Adonai.”²

The problem is that in this verse the original Hebrew word is not “adonai”! In this verse, the KJV has clouded the issue by assigning an upper case “L” to the quite different word, “ADONI.” In all other places where this word is translated as “lord” in the KJV, it appears with a lower case “l.” (Dan 12:8 provides an unexplained exception).

THE HEBREW LESSON

We need first to look at the use of all the Hebrew words which are translated “lord.” The information for the following short “Hebrew lesson” has been gleaned from Young's Concordance and recent E-mail correspondence with my good friend Anthony Buzzard.

YHWH, ADON, ADONI, AND ADONAI

Young lists eleven Hebrew words which are translated “lord.” The four which concern us here are those listed in the heading immediately above.

1. YHWH (Yahweh or Jehovah). This word is the first “LORD” in Psalm 110:1. It is the Divine Name considered so sacred by the Jews, that it is **never** pronounced. Instead when reading from the Scriptures they substitute the word “Adonai” (see below). The accepted convention is that in English translations it **always** appears as either LORD, or GOD (all upper case) thus enabling us to recognize that the original word is “Yahweh.”

2. ADON. This word is formed from the Hebrew consonants Aleph, Dalet, Nun. It appears often in this form (without any suffix). Apart from about 30

² On about 30 occasions the word “adon” is also translated with an upper case “L,” referring to God. However it should be noted that “adon” much more often refers to a human lord, and then it is printed with a lower case “l.”

occasions where it refers to the Divine Lord, all of the other occurrences refer to human lords. In English, it always has a lower case “l,” except on those comparatively few occasions where it refers to God. In those cases it is given an upper case “L.”

It is important to distinguish carefully between “Adon” and three other similar, but quite distinct, words which are formed from it by the addition of suffixes.

3. ADONAI. “Adonai” accounts for *two* of the three other words just mentioned above. It is formed from the root word “adon” with the addition of the suffix “AI.” In its main form, it always refers to God, and *no one else*. The “translators’ convention” is that in this form, it always appears in English as “Lord” (with an upper case “L”).

This divine title, “Adonai,” has a different vowel point under the “N” to distinguish it from a second much less common form of the word. (The second form of “Adonai” is used in the *plural*, of men, very occasionally.)

4. ADONI. This is formed by adding the suffix “i” to “adon.” With this suffix it means “*my* lord.” (It is also sometimes translated as “master.”) It appears 195 times, and is used almost entirely of non-divine, human lords (occasionally of angels). When translated “lord,” it always appears with a lower case “l” (except for that one time in Psalm 110:1).

THE VOWEL POINTS IN PSALM 110:1

The Hebrew text identifies vowels by a system of “vowel points” (which, to the untrained eye, look like random “dots” and “squiggles”) placed above, below, or alongside the appropriate consonant. This vowel pointing system was developed by the Massoretes.

Now for some more information provided by Anthony Buzzard. As mentioned above, the two words “ADONAI” and “ADONI” are both formed from the root word “ADON.” They share the same consonants — ADNY, i.e. in Hebrew, ALEPH, DALET, NUN, YOD. The difference is in the vowel pointing:

- “ADONAI” is formed by placing the point “quamets” under NUN.
- “ADONI” is formed by placing the point “hireq” under NUN.

(Just one tiny letter different, but an enormous difference in meaning!)

CONFIRMATION FROM THE SEPTUAGINT

There are some who persist in reading the word ADONAI in this verse, instead of ADONI. This is usually justified by claiming that the Massoretes have assigned the wrong vowel points. However the “Greek factor” from the Septuagint version (LXX) supports the Massoretes. The following information was passed on to me recently by Bill Wachtel.³

The Hebrew text in Psalm 110:1 is actually LADONI (“L” + “adoni”).

ADONI = my lord.

LADONI = TO my lord.

In the Greek of the LXX, LADONI becomes “*to kurio mou*” (= to my lord). If the text had read “LADONAI” (= to the Divine Lord) the Greek would have read simply “*to kurio.*” Thus the LXX confirms for us that the original Hebrew is indeed ADONI, and that the Massoretes got it right!

THE MESSIANIC CONNECTION

Many have incorrectly assumed that the original Hebrew word in Psalm 110:1 is ADONAI (which *always* refers to God). This has led to the further incorrect assumption that the verse is a “proof text” for the doctrine of a Triune Godhead. However, we have seen that the actual Hebrew word used is ADONI. This word refers to *human lords*. It speaks of a human Messiah — not of a second Deity.

Psalm 110:1 should be studied in the context of the many New Testament quotations which use it. Viewed properly, it is clearly Messianic. It does not support the “co-equal Deity” of the Messiah.

In the 23 places where it is quoted in the NT, the overwhelming conclusion is that the early Church relied very heavily on Psalm 110:1 to prove that the MAN Jesus, who now sits at the right hand of God, is indeed both *Messiah* and **Son of God**.

As David’s *descendant*, Jesus would normally be considered by Jewish tradition to be INFERIOR in rank to David. But through his miraculous Divine paternity and resurrection, the impossible has

³ Bill Wachtel has an M.A. in New Testament from Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois. He was an instructor at Oregon Bible College (now Atlanta Bible College) of the Church of God General Conference from 1962 to 1968, and president from 1963 to 1968. At OBC he taught Greek, as well as other biblical subjects.

happened! Although Jesus is *both* totally human, and descended from David, he nevertheless **OUTRANKS** him by *right of birth and his ascension*.

As “Son of David,” Jesus will inherit David’s throne (Luke 1:32-33). As “Son of God,” Jesus has also been “*highly exalted to receive the name which is above every name*” (Philippians 2:9-11).

**In accordance with the Scriptures,
Jesus is forever both man and Messiah.
His throne is for ever.**

His name is above David’s name forever.

He is David’s King forever!

THAT is why David calls him “lord”!

THE MASSORETIC VOWEL POINTS

The following information on the Massorettes and their work has been condensed from various books, encyclopedias and Internet sources.

The ancient Hebrew texts were comprised of consonants only. There were no vowels or punctuation marks. The Massorettes were Hebrew scholars who, over several centuries, established a system of vowel markings and accents to indicate the traditional pronunciation and intonation. The work of supplying “vowel points” was not completed until several centuries after the beginning of the Christian era.

One sometimes encounters people whose determination to retain Psalm 110:1 as a Trinitarian “proof text” leads them to discount the reliability of the Massoretic vowel pointing system, in favor of some other personal preference, to suit their particular theological bias. However, unless there is compelling documented evidence for variations in the biblical text, the text must be accepted. We must be very cautious about introducing arbitrary changes into the sacred documents, lest we leave ourselves open to accusations of “intellectual dishonesty.”

The following summary will provide a brief introduction to the Massorettes:

- The work of the Massorettes was done principally in the period AD 500-900.
- Although there were different schools of Massorettes, their differences seem to have left us very few variations in the meaning of the Hebrew consonantal text (certainly none in Ps. 110:1).
- It was the goal of the Massorettes to preserve the traditional meaning of the Hebrew text. (This was perceived as necessary, because ancient Hebrew is a

strictly consonantal language, and therefore prone to error in transmission.)

- One of the ways they did this was to develop a system of vowel pointing, which indicates the traditional pronunciation and meaning of the text.

- Since Hebrew is a consonantal language, there are many places where the same consonants are used for quite different words.

(Note: That is no different from English! Often the same consonants form different words when associated with different vowels. Often the same combination of consonants and vowels has a different pronunciation, and a different meaning. When that happens, we use context and tradition to interpret the intended meaning.)

- The Massoretic vowel pointing indicates the traditional meaning, understanding, and pronunciation which had formerly been passed down from generation to generation, by oral tradition, through authorized teachers.

- In cases where identical groups of consonants were traditionally understood to be different words, with different meanings attached, the pointing system made that clear and preserved it for future generations.

- Our current English translations all rely heavily on the pointed text.

As a layman, I conclude that what we have now is the work of dedicated Jewish scholars. It reflects the best consensus about what was *already* accepted as the traditional understanding of the text, over many centuries.

Consequently when the Massorettes reported “adoni” instead of “adonai” in Psalm 110:1, they were following the oral tradition. As we have already seen above, the LXX, which predates the pointed text by centuries, supports this conclusion. The Massorettes knew that in the unpointed text for that verse, the word “ADNY” was properly read and understood as a human lord, “ADONI,” and not the divine Lord, “ADONAI.”

And in the providence of God, they inserted vowel points which preserved it that way for us and our English translators.⁴✧

⁴ For a full discussion of Psalm 110, see *Glory at the Right Hand* by D.M. Hay, Abingdon, 1973.

Points to Ponder

Not everything is straightforward in Bible interpretation. The writers of the New Testament were (with the probable exception of Luke) first-century Jews. When Jesus said that “all these things,” including his second coming, would happen to “this generation” (Matt. 24:34), the word “generation” should be treated with care. To Americans in the 20th century a “generation” will mean a period of some 40 years. But is that what it invariably means in the Bible?

The Bible says that “God is in the generation of the righteous” (Ps. 14:5). “A period of 40 years” will not fit the context. It will yield no meaning. Those whose hands and hearts are clean are “the generation” of them who seek God’s face (Ps. 24:6). The wicked “fathers” of Israel were a “stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation which did not set their heart aright” (Ps. 78:8). “There is a *generation* which curses their father and does not bless their mother” (Prov. 30:11). But “generation” here does not mean people living as contemporaries for a period of some 40 years.

What we discover is that there is a moral meaning for generation. “Generation” in this case means a class of human beings characterized by a certain moral or spiritual virtue or defect. When Jesus said that “this generation will not pass until all these things have happened,” he had in mind the whole inter-advent period of human history and society which would be mainly in opposition to God. This present evil age (Gal. 1:4) may be called a “generation” as composed of persons sharing the same wicked tendency. Jesus did not say that the events of the Olivet Prophecy would be completed within forty years!

To insist that Jesus thought that the Second Coming (*Parousia*) would happen within 40 years results in two possible outcomes, equally untenable: 1) Jesus was wrong. 2) The Second Coming of Jesus happened in AD 70! Both these blunders can be avoided if we are sensitive to the meaning of words in their Hebrew context. In a country in which the study of classical and foreign languages is no longer a high priority in schools, there is all the more reason to be cautious about superficial treatment of the meaning

of biblical words. An extensive perusal of the various lexicons of biblical terms should not be bypassed. Nor should journals dedicated to biblical exposition, in addition to detailed commentaries, be omitted from the “toolbox” of those who seek understanding. Theological libraries are available in large towns everywhere.

One more caution. When we address a person or persons as “you,” we naturally understand such persons to be living contemporaries of ours. But notice how Jesus thinks differently. Speaking to the religious establishment of his day, Jesus said: “All the righteous blood shed upon the earth will come upon YOU, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zachariah, Son of Barachiah, whom YOU murdered between the temple and the altar” (Matt. 23:35). But those Pharisees standing before Jesus were not *personally* responsible for the death of the prophet mentioned in II Chronicles who had lived and died several centuries earlier. Jesus is using the pronoun YOU in his own very Hebrew way, to incorporate a group of people living over a long span of time, but united by the same evil character.

Such “corporate” thinking will also explain how Jesus commanded the Apostles to go into the world and preach the Gospel of the Kingdom until the end of the age (Matt. 28:19, 20). “I will be with YOU,” Jesus declared. Yet those who heard him speak have long since died, and the end of the age has not yet come. The “YOU” places the Apostles and those disciples who come after them in a single company of evangelists. Together they are viewed in “solidarity” with each other, though they are not all alive at the same time. The Great Commission will end only when Jesus returns. Until the end of *the age* (not “world,” as mistranslated in the KJV), Jesus promises to be with all those who relay to the world the Gospel as Jesus preached it — the Gospel about the Kingdom of God, Jesus’ favorite topic. ✧

Atlanta Bible College will be hosting its eighth Theological Conference from April 30 to May 2, 1999. Speakers will include Ferenc Jeszenszky of Hungary and Werner Bartl of Austria. Lectures will address issues of New Testament faith in its original setting. For more information call Atlanta Bible College at 800-347-4261 or (404) 362-0052. Further details will appear in future issues.