

Focus on the Kingdom

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The One God, the Father, One Man Messiah, Gospel of the Kingdom Translation from the Greek

We offer readers here a sample of what I hope to complete as a biblical unitarian, Kingdom of God Gospel translation of the NT Greek. The English is intended to be easy to read and constant emphasis is laid on what we believe to be forgotten truths held by the original community of believers. This group of believers was well instructed by Jesus and his chosen Apostles. Later tradition, imposing itself from the second century onwards, and strongly influenced by alien Greek philosophy, makes it hard for modern readers to grasp the essential simplicity of the pristine faith “once and for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). The footnotes are meant to strengthen the reader’s appreciation of the core concepts of the NT.

This translation has as its premise the conviction that church often gives you a strongly Greek-influenced version of the NT. Two voices of protest and alarm may be cited, Eberhard Griesebach and Canon Goudge:

“In its encounter with Greek philosophy Christianity became theology. That was the fall of Christianity.”

“When the Greek and Roman mind instead of the Hebrew mind came to dominate the Church there occurred a disaster in doctrine and practice from which we have never recovered.”

Translations, particularly some modern ones like the NIV (New International Version), “help” the reader to see things in the NT which reinforce his or her impression that “orthodoxy” is solidly biblical. But this involves “pushing” the Greek text beyond what it actually says. This unfair process is an attempt to justify the later *departure* from the original faith. It smoothes over the embarrassing difference between the original Greek NT and what from the 2nd century developed as a tragic departure from biblical orthodoxy.

The most striking example of this embarrassing difference between Jesus and the beliefs of those claiming to follow him is the unitarian creed affirmed with maximum emphasis by Jesus in discussion with a colleague Jew. “The Lord our God is one Lord.” This is a unitary monotheistic and certainly not a Trinitarian creed.

This point needs to be repeated: This tendency is most starkly demonstrated by the failure of Bible readers to take with utmost seriousness Jesus’ own unitarian, i.e. unitary monotheistic definition of God in Mark 12:29. In

that classic passage Jesus is seen to be in total harmony with a friendly Jewish scholar.

The creed of Israel was never Trinitarian. Thus the fact that Jesus affirms and agrees with the unitarian creed of Judaism ought to provide a provocative and life-changing embarrassment to today’s Church which has ceased to quote the creed of Jesus. Thus Christianity is marked by the remarkable characteristic that it is the only world religion which begins by discarding its own founder’s creed.

Using the standard manuscripts as base (i.e. the Greek text edited by Metzger) my hope is to bring into clear focus the very uncomplicated NT definition of God as the Father of Jesus and certainly not as Triune.

I have of course gained immensely from all of some 60 modern translations. I have consulted various German and French translations too, which often suggest striking ways of conveying the original. All these translations convey the sense of much of the Greek in varied but entirely acceptable ways. However in certain key passages they misrepresent the Greek text in an effort to portray Jesus as God the Son, second member of an eternal Trinity. They also obscure the fundamental fact that Jesus was the original preacher of the saving Gospel about the Kingdom of God (Luke 4:43).

My other major aim is to define the saving Gospel as Jesus defined it. I believe that the “Gospel about the Kingdom” with which Jesus laid the foundation of all sound belief is virtually absent from cotemporary tracts, books and websites offering “salvation.”

Paul is then often twisted by a selection of a few verses taken out of context. Romans 10 is typical and Jesus’ version of the Gospel is bypassed in the process. Romans 10:17 (almost never cited) shows that believing the Gospel means believing the words of Jesus!

I am sure that Jesus was a Jew as the descendant of David. The most spectacular of his teachings, which will be our judge (John 12:44; Acts 17:31, etc.) is his impassioned affirmation of the Shema of Israel, found in Deuteronomy 6:4. This belief in the one and only, single-Person God, the Father, is enthusiastically affirmed and agreed by a Jewish scribe in Mark 12:28ff. On no account should any reader of the NT in its own context imagine that Jesus believed in the Trinity of post-biblical councils.

In this translation I make a concerted effort to remind readers of the unitary monotheistic faith of the NT, the definition of the Son of God as the lord Messiah (Luke

2:11) and not a second person of a triune Godhead. A great deal of refreshing simplicity and peace of mind results from reading the writings of the NT community in their Jewish first-century context. We are touching base with the original roots of the faith and the NT comes alive in a brilliant way.

The confusion caused by the later (from the early second century) fall from the original faith is gargantuan. It will take time to clear the air and defog our minds. But the effort is well worth it, although revolutions are never without pain.

Religion from the second century developed its own “improved version” of the biblical drama presented in Scripture. The Bible itself is a gripping drama, portraying the great Plan of God to bestow on human persons the gift of indestructible life — immortality. The emerging Catholic Church created its own embroidered version of the original plot and thus lost the plot for itself and its billions of followers. At the same time the “improved version” created a powerful and often wealthy hierarchy, which often kept the masses in ignorance and guaranteed a huge prestige to its priest leaders. They capped this effort finally by declaring the chief leader, the Pope, to be infallible when speaking officially.

The spectacular drama provided in the birth narratives of Matthew and Luke was given an additional tabloid twist when Mary, an innocent virgin, was said to be herself sinless and a permanent virgin, without sexual experience for her whole life. Jesus’ half brothers had then to be denied that status and turned into cousins (or children of Joseph by a previous marriage). Mary was said to have been assumed to heaven bodily without dying. The Roman Catholic Church assumed the role of the state as the Kingdom of God coming in advance of Jesus, its only legitimate king and world ruler. The system of faith promoted by the new improved version of the biblical drama elevated priests as the only ones educated to minister the mysteries of the new faith. The laity were put under guardians. The control of millions of minds was ensured and theological education was denied to all but leadership. The permanence of this massively powerful tradition was thus guaranteed.

The Protestant reformation in the 16th century was provoked by the obvious abuses of the inherited system to call for change, but its reform was partial. The same mysterious triune God continued to replace the single God of the Bible, the Father of Jesus. Jesus’ unitarian heritage and definition of God, long suppressed by tradition, was not permitted in general to resurface from under the rubble of tradition which held the minds of the masses under its sway.

“Heaven” at death continued to replace the biblical Kingdom of God on a renewed earth, which was the heart of the Hebrew, prophetic dream of peace on earth as well

as the heart of the saving Gospel of the Kingdom announced by Jesus and the NT community.

A smaller more radical wing of the Reformation was cruelly suppressed when it challenged the theology of the major Reformation led by Luther and Calvin. Englishman John Biddle who exposed the error of the Trinity had the “honor” of having an act of the British Parliament passed against him and he died in prison. His crime was merely to have pointed to the unvarnished simplicity of Jesus’ own definition of God in the Shema, the Hear, O Israel of Deuteronomy 6:4 and Mark 12:29.

The Church achieved an enormous success and added a number of show-stopping features to its version of the Biblical drama. However the casualty in this unfortunate development was the original divine Drama of Scripture in two acts, offering to suffering mankind the hope of immortality and a place of responsibility in the future Kingdom of God on earth when Jesus returns. The original story-line and plot of the divine drama in the pages of Scripture was replaced with a dazzling but perverted story, a mixture of paganism and Scripture. Once we lose the plot of the astonishing drama, Scripture becomes confusing, Church tradition takes over and intelligent Bible reading is thwarted.

Luke

1 ¹Many others have undertaken the task of writing an account of the things that have happened among us. They based their reports on evidence as handed down from the earliest eyewitnesses and ministers of the Gospel-Word.¹ ³And so I decided also that since I have tracked down and investigated all these things very carefully from the beginning, it would be appropriate for me to write out an accurate narrative of all that occurred. ⁴I have done this, most honorable Theophilus, so you can

¹The Gospel throughout the NT is always the Gospel about the Kingdom of God. It did not need to be repeated in its full title, just as we know that USA stands for United States of America and not the United Stamp Association. The Gospel of the Kingdom of God is the saving Gospel as preached first by Jesus (Heb. 2:3). Luke unites the pre-cross and post-cross preaching of the same Gospel by reminding us in Acts 1:3; 1:6; 8:12; 19:8; 20:24-25; 28:23, 30, 31 that to the end of the age (the Second Coming) there is one saving Gospel, “the Gospel about the Kingdom and the things concerning the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 8:12 is an early creed). The Gospel of the Kingdom appears in the shorthand, in-house phrase “word of God,” “word of the Kingdom,” and “word.” The public is severely misled by not recognizing this rather easy fact. “Word of God” is not in Scripture just a synonym for the Bible. The Bible refers to itself as the Scriptures, holy writings. Jesus defined the limits of the Hebrew canon as the “Law, Prophets and Psalms/Writings” (Luke 24:44).

have absolute certainty that what you were taught as the faith is totally reliable.

⁵During the time when Herod was king of Judea, there was a priest called Zechariah, who belonged to the Abijah priestly division.² He was married to Elizabeth, who was also descended from Aaron the priest. ⁶They both constantly did what was right before God, being careful to follow all the Lord's commandments and regulations. ⁷They had no children because Elizabeth was unable to have any, and they were both well-advanced in years. ⁸While Zechariah was serving as a priest before God, on behalf of his priestly division, ⁹he was chosen by lot according to priestly custom to enter the Temple of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰During the time for offering incense a large crowd of people were praying outside.

¹¹An angel of the Lord³ then appeared to Zechariah, standing to the right of the altar of incense. ¹²When Zechariah saw the angel, he was startled and became terrified. ¹³But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah. Your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will call him John. ¹⁴He will bring you joy and gladness, and many will celebrate his birth. ¹⁵He will be great in the sight of the Lord God. He will abstain from drinking wine or any other alcoholic drink.⁴ He will be filled with holy spirit⁵ even before he is born. ¹⁶He will turn many Israelites back to the Lord their God. ¹⁷He will precede the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to their children, and to turn those who are

²The 8th division of the 24 "courses" of priests (1 Chron. 24:10). 888 is the numerical value of Jesus in Greek (cp. 666 for antichrist). 8 following 7 is a number of new beginnings.

³I.e. the one LORD GOD of Israel, the GOD of biblical monotheism, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴This was a special regulation for Nazarites and certainly not for the people of Israel or the New Covenant community. Alcohol, used in proper moderation, was a God-given gift for celebration. Compare Jesus' turning 120 gallons of water into alcohol at the wedding in Cana. Some American fundamentalist churches turned that wine into grape juice, an equal "miracle." *Oinos* in Greek does not mean grape juice. If it did, Paul would have said "Do not get drunk on grape juice, but be filled with the spirit" (Eph. 5:18).

⁵The divine operational, creative presence and power of God working a miracle in Mary — certainly not a "third Person," unknown to the NT. The imagined third Person is never worshiped and never prayed to. The spirit of Jesus and of God in the NT is the operational presence and power of the Father and the exalted Son, very personal as coming from persons, as their outreach and influence, but never a "third Person" of a Trinity. The comforter or *Paraclete* of John's gospel is defined as the risen Jesus in 1 John 2:1. Jesus departed from the disciples and, not leaving them orphans, was present with them as the holy spirit comforter. Cp. II Cor. 3:17, 18.

rebellious back to a right understanding — to prepare a people ready for the Lord."

¹⁸"How can I be sure about this?" Zechariah asked the angel. "I am an old man, and my wife is getting old too." ¹⁹"I am Gabriel," the angel replied. "I stand in God's presence and service, and I was sent to speak to you and give you this good news. ²⁰But since you did not believe what I told you, you are going to become mute, unable to speak, until the appointed time when my words come true."

²¹Outside, the people were waiting for Zechariah, wondering why he was so long delayed in the Temple. ²²When eventually he came out, he was unable to speak to them. They realized that he had seen a vision in the Temple, for though he could make gestures, he was speechless. ²³After completing his time of service, he went back home. ²⁴Some time later his wife Elizabeth became pregnant. She stayed at home for five months. ²⁵"The Lord has done this for me," she said, "now that He has taken away my disgrace in the eyes of others."

²⁶Then in the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy God sent the angel Gabriel to a young virgin called Mary who lived in the town of Nazareth⁶ in Galilee. ²⁷She was engaged to a man named Joseph. ²⁸The angel greeted her. "You are very privileged," he said to her. "The Lord is with you." ²⁹Mary was deeply troubled at what he said, and wondered what this greeting might mean. ³⁰"Do not be alarmed, Mary," the angel went on, "for God has shown great kindness to you. ³¹You will become pregnant and give birth to a son. You will name him Jesus. ³²He will be very great, and he will be called the Son of the Most High God. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David, ³³and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever. His Kingdom will never come to an end."

³⁴"How is this possible?" Mary asked. "I am still a virgin and not married." ³⁵"Holy spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High⁷ will overshadow you. For that reason precisely the baby to be fathered⁸

⁶This was hardly what we would call a town today. It was only recently found by archeologists and may have been about 4 acres in size!

⁷Holy spirit here is the operational presence and power of God to effect a biological miracle. The parallel phrase "power of the Most High" repeats and reinforces the meaning of "holy spirit." The disaster of later theological speculation is signaled by the amazing misunderstanding of Justin Martyr who believed that the power coming over Mary was a preexisting SON engineering his own conception! Thus the departure into a pagan crypto-Gnostic Jesus was under way by 150 AD and earlier in the writings of Ignatius and others.

⁸Begotten, brought into existence (*gennaio*). Thus the "eternal begetting" of the Son is false to the Bible. As Trinitarian scholar McCleod notes, "It is uncertain what

will be called holy and the Son of God.⁹ 36And Elizabeth, your relative, even she is pregnant in her old age. The woman who people said could not have children is already six months pregnant! 37Nothing is impossible for God.” 38“Here I am, ready to be the Lord’s servant,” Mary said. “May it happen to me just as you said.”

Then the angel left her. 39A little while later, Mary got herself ready and hurried into the hills of Judea, to the town where 40Zechariah’s house was. She called out to Elizabeth as she went in. 41As soon as Elizabeth heard Mary’s voice, the baby jumped for joy inside her. Elizabeth was filled with holy spirit, 42and cried out with a loud voice, “How blessed you are among women, and how blessed will be the child born to you! 43I am so honored that the mother of my lord¹⁰ Messiah should visit me? 44As soon as I heard you call out, my baby jumped for joy inside me. 45How fortunate you are, because you are convinced that the Lord will do what he has promised you!”¹¹

content if any may be given to the phrase ‘eternal begetting.’” This is an admission of a nonsense phrase in the “orthodox” system, since one cannot have a “beginningless beginning.” The only *biblical* begetting of the Son of God was in Mary by miracle some 2000 years ago. This of course means that Luke and those he wrote about were not believers in a triune God. The Son was the human being brought into existence by biological miracle in Mary. “Precisely for this reason [and no other] he will be called the Son of God,” meaning that this was who he was! The KJV is misleading with its “wherefore also,” to promote by insinuation the idea that there is another reason for the begetting! Luke is an embarrassment to later claims of “orthodoxy.”

⁹This is a fundamentally important defining of the term “Son of God,” far removed from the post-biblical idea of a pre-human Son, second member of a Trinity. Leading commentator Godet says: “We have here from the mouth of the angel himself an authentic explanation of the term Son of God...After this explanation Mary could only understand the title [and so should we!] in the sense: a human being of whose existence God Himself is the immediate author. It does not convey the idea of preexistence [and thus makes impossible the later idea of ‘God the Son’].” The later “dogmatic” definition of the Son of God as “eternally begotten” suppressed the easy truth reported by Luke. That “eternal begetting” is foreign to the Bible is widely recognized by scholars.

¹⁰“My lord” is the title for the Messiah as foreseen in the divine oracle of Ps. 110:1. The Hebrew word *adoni*, my lord, is never in all 195 of its occurrences a title of Deity. It is always a reference to an exalted human being, occasionally an angel. “My lord” (Messiah) is the common description among the biblical community for God’s uniquely begotten Son (Ps. 2:7; 2 Sam. 7:14). Jesus is “my lord,” or “our lord,” and these are the titles appropriate for the ultimate King of Israel, the Messiah, son of David.

¹¹This is the essence of NT faith, believing the words and

46Mary replied, “How I praise the Lord! 47I am so delighted with God my Savior, 48because He decided that I, his servant, was worthy of His consideration, despite my humble background. From now on every generation will know how blessed I am. 49God Almighty has done great things for me; His name is holy. 50His mercy is for generation after generation on those who reverence Him. 51With His power He has broken to pieces those who arrogantly think they are so clever. 52He tears the powerful down from their thrones, and elevates those who are humble. 53He fills the hungry with good things to eat, and He sends the rich away empty-handed. 54He has helped His servant Israel, remembering him in mercy, 55just as He promised to our fathers, to Abraham and his descendants for the Age to Come.”¹² 56Mary stayed with Elizabeth for three months and then returned home.

57The time came for Elizabeth to have her baby, and she gave birth to a son. 58Her neighbors and relatives heard how the Lord had shown her great kindness, and they celebrated with her. 59Eight days later they came to circumcise the boy. They planned to call him Zechariah after his father. 60“No,” Elizabeth said. “He is going to be called John.” 61“But there is nobody among your relatives who has this name,” they said. 62Through gestures they asked Zechariah, the boy’s father, what he wanted to call his son. 63Zechariah motioned for something to write on. To everyone’s surprise he wrote, “His name is John.” 64Immediately Zechariah’s ability to speak returned, and he started praising God. 65All those living nearby were in awe at what had happened, and the news spread throughout the hill country of Judea. 66Everyone who heard the news wondered what it meant. “What will the little boy grow up to be?” they asked, for it was clear he was very special to God.

67Zechariah, his father, filled with holy spirit, spoke this prophecy: 68“‘The Lord, the God of Israel, He is wonderful, for He has intervened for His people and set them free.’”¹³ 69He has given us a great Savior from the

promises of God. Zechariah had already been punished supernaturally for failing to believe the angel. This is a fair warning for us all. Angels are to be believed as divine messengers. Not to believe them is to imply that God has made a false promise! People often wind up in the same unbelief by twisting the words of Scripture to bring them into a much later doctrine originating in post-biblical Councils.

¹²I take *eis ton aiona* to mean “in regard to the Age to Come,” the Kingdom of God. God did not “speak forever,” but more directly of the future Age to Come of the Kingdom of God to come on earth at the future Second Coming of Jesus to rule from Jerusalem, with the saints of all the ages (Dan 7:14, 18, 22, 27, RSV).

¹³The human ancestry of Jesus is crystal clear here and delightfully free of the tortured theology of later centuries which produced the brain-breaking idea that Jesus was 100%

biological line of his servant David, ⁷⁰as He promised through His holy prophets long ago. ⁷¹He promised to save us from our enemies, from those who hate us. ⁷²He was merciful to our fathers, remembering His holy covenant — ⁷³the promise which He made to our father Abraham. ⁷⁴He gives us freedom from fear and rescues us from our enemies, ⁷⁵so that we can serve Him by doing what is good and right our whole lives. ⁷⁶And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High, for you will go ahead of the Lord to prepare His ways, ⁷⁷providing knowledge of salvation to His people through the forgiveness of their sins. ⁷⁸Through God's caring kindness to us, heaven's dawn will break upon us, ⁷⁹to shine on those who live in darkness and under the shadow of death, and to guide us along the path which leads to peace." ⁸⁰The boy John grew and became spiritually strong. He lived in the desert until the time came for his public ministry to Israel. ✧

Psalm 110:1: A verse which will yet change the world by defining Jesus not as GOD, not as LORD, but as lord, the non-Deity supremely exalted human being. Adoni is never the title of Deity.

What the LORD says to my **master**. (Common English Bible)

The LORD said to my **lord**. (Easy to Read Bible)

The LORD said to my **lord**. (Good News Translation)

A declaration of Yahweh to my **lord**. (Lexham English Bible)

Here is the LORD's proclamation to my **lord**. (New English Translation)

The LORD says to my **lord**. (NIV)

The LORD says to my **lord**. (NIV UK)

Hashem said unto **Adoni**. (Orthodox Jewish Bible)

The LORD says to my **lord**. (TNIV footnote)

“Dogma uses concepts for the construction of the immanent life in God that in biblical terminology pertain to the record of revelation. ‘Son of God’ is the name of the historic Christ while where the pre-existing mediator of revelation is referred to, ‘logos’ is used. **Thus the doctrine of eternal generation as a basis for the preexistence lacks support in the Bible.** John 1:14, 3:16

God and 100% man. Certainly Jesus was the unique expression of the One God, as His sinless Son, miraculously begotten. But he is never called “the Lord God,” or “the Almighty,” and never God the Son, nor the “God-man.” The Father is called God, and often “**the** [one] God” about 1300 times. The definite article appearing often for the One God designates Him as the One God of Israel and of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and of Jesus. Someone who has a GOD is not GOD!

expresses the close relation between Father and Son in regard to its stability, not its origin; and ‘the first born of every creature’ of Colossians 1:15 alludes to the preeminence of the author of salvation over creation, not to his origin. Particularly is there no reference in the New Testament to the procession of the Holy Spirit, in the sense of immanent origin, but always as being sent into the world” (Otto Kirn, PhD, ThD, professor of Dogmatics, University of Leipzig).

So the Church in claiming an eternal generation of the Son has moved beyond the Bible, while claiming *sola scriptura* (i.e. “we believe in the Bible only”) — a false claim! ✧

Visiting a University

Barbara and I were privileged to spend an exciting two days on the campus of the University of Southern Indiana. A colleague of mine, Dr. Brian Atra, teaches courses on ethics and world religion to bright young students whose career fields cover a wide range of specialties: medicine, law, and business, etc. We were impressed with the earnestness of the students, among them atheists, agnostics and believers in various religions. A university setting provides an environment for inquiry free from the fear of the sometimes stifling restraints of church dogma imposed on churchgoers, who seldom ask the really important questions about why they believe what they believe.

For example, failure to believe that “Jesus is God” (making two Gods since the Father is universally recognized as being God) or that the wicked will be tortured in eternal agony by God who is proclaimed to be full of compassion and mercy, can lead to excommunication (the “left foot of fellowship”!) and alienation, simply because one has dared to ask an honest question.

A day earlier than our visit an atheist professor had lectured against any kind of belief in God, because the Church promotes a God who will torment the wicked literally forever and ever. When we met him briefly I was able to say that we agreed with him that a God who tortures for eternity is to be rejected and is not the God of the Bible or of Jesus.

A recent book by Edward Fudge, *Hell: A Final Word* (reviewed by Barbara at 21stcr.org), is happily causing many to rethink the awful doctrine of perpetual endless torment. There is also a new movie *Hell and Mr. Fudge* (see hellandmrfudge.com to find out about a showing in your area).

I was able to speak to students on issues of war and peace in the history of Christian thinking and suggest that the Mennonites have put their finger on a staggeringly interesting issue when they issued this challenge: “A modest proposal for peace: Let the Christians of the

world agree that they will not kill each other.” Then I spoke also on Jesus and the Kingdom of God, pointing out that Jesus’ Gospel is a challenge to believe in God’s good news about the coming Kingdom of God when Jesus returns to this earth (Mark 1:14-15). One student noted: “You seem to be saying that Jesus isn’t God”!

I invited each student to think hard about Jesus’ blockbuster response to a Jewish scribe in Mark 12:28ff. The greatest of all commandments is “Listen, Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord.” That is the Lord to be loved with all our being, soul, mind and strength. Ask your friends this: Did Jesus here propose a unitarian or Trinitarian definition of God? Was Jesus a Trinitarian? If the answer is, as it should be, “obviously not,” then one might ask a churchgoer, Why are you a Trinitarian? Why don’t you believe in the God in whom Jesus believed? Such conversations can well get the process started by which it may dawn on a person that Christianity is the only world religion which begins by discarding its own founder’s creed.

I am grateful to my colleague Brian Atra for allowing us to experience the stimulating atmosphere of the university classroom. Encouraging, too, was the fact that Brian had recently received an “Outstanding Teaching Award” in competition with about 350 professors. ✧

A Conversation Starter or Stopper

Try this on your friends: “You, Obama, are the only one who is the true President of the USA at present.”

This proposition no one will argue with.

Now this from Jesus: “You, Father, are the only one who is the true God” (John 17:3; cp. Isa. 37:20).

That proposition will be resisted passionately! Could this be because the mists of prejudice have conditioned people not to be able to hear simple language? “Only” as we all know excludes everyone else from the category in question.

The resurrection of Jesus was on “the third day.” This is said repeatedly in the NT. Angels said it (Luke 24:7), Jesus said it (Luke 24:46), Scripture said it (1 Cor. 15:4), and the disciples knew that Jesus was expected to rise on the third day (Luke 24:21). Finally, as they walk to Emmaus on SUNDAY they say “Today is the third day” since the crucifixion on Friday. That third day was Sunday and so Sunday is the day of the resurrection. Luke 24:21 is the explicit statement of the resurrection on Sunday, and should put an end to all argument. For inclusive reckoning, see Luke 13:32-33.

Comments

A correspondent from Washington told us the story of how he was run off the road by two men, gays, who were smoking marijuana. This was just after the state passed legislation in favor of this lifestyle. We fully understand that various departures from the high

standards set by God, the Creator, all count as sin. But it is astonishing to us that a “Bible-believing” nation would not see that Apostolic authority in Romans 1 strongly indicts sexual activity outside monogamous heterosexual marriage. The warning is for all of us and our children.

“I’ve been listening to many of your messages from your website and debates on youtube, as well as reading your books over the last many months (as well as many other brothers along these same lines — especially enjoyed the messages on thebyteshow.com with GeorgeAnn Hughes). I’m also going through your Focus on the Kingdom Radio Programs (now on message 88) — they’re all very interesting. I’ve been a believer for about 25 years and have heard many different points of view regarding what the Gospel is all about. I must say that the view that you hold, and the others with you, appears to be the most scriptural and persuasive, given all the Hebrew Scriptures and prophetic writings that clearly point to the Kingdom of Heaven/God on earth. I’m especially seeing how much Greek thought and philosophy has eclipsed the message of the Kingdom of God and obscured the identity of our Lord Jesus Christ.” — *Texas*

“As I ponder what you’ve written here, I must say that I agree with you for the most part. In fact, I think that Psalm 110:1 appears to be fueling this ‘Jesus is Lord’ creed [It is the basis for the title “lord” for Jesus]. I agree that ‘Jesus is YHWH’ is an impossibility in a strictly ontological [Greek philosophical] sense. However, along with Psalm 110:1, we have the use of Joel 2:32. The compact creed ‘Jesus is Lord’ in Romans 10:9 must be interpreted in light of the context. In verse 13 Paul quotes Joel 2:32. In the LXX, ‘Lord’ was used for ‘YHWH.’”

Yes, this is not difficult. Jesus does YHVH things in the NT, but this is because he is YHVH’s agent and does things authorized by YHVH. It does not of course mean that Jesus is Yahweh, which, horror of horrors, would make two YHVHs.

“Thank you for your publication of *Focus on the Kingdom* which you continue to send me. I just received recently the October 2012 issue. I found your view of Abomination of Desolation in Daniel 9:27 was close to my view. I was always blessed by reading some of your discussion about the issue of Trinity and who God is and the Lord Jesus Christ, although some are repetitious but you make the point. I am now unconvinced with the Trinitarian God (my former view which I defended) and am convinced that the unitarian view is more biblical and strong compared with others. I have shared your books with my friends, church leaders and pastor who is interested in in-depth studies.” — *Philippines*

“Thank you so much for the *Focus on the Kingdom* which I share with my father. We enjoy it very much because you are teaching the truth unlike the 44,000

religious groups in the world today. My father shares your wonderful writings to others.” — *Philippines*

“Words are not enough to express my thankfulness for your labor of love in spreading the gospel message. Your website is getting better and better. How thankful I was to be a part of the meeting in Germany, 2010. Please tell Barbara how I enjoy her book reviews. I came across her articles at **21stcr.org**. She too, has a great ability to write. What a gift our Father has bestowed on you both.” — *Germany*

“I hope to be able to attend the Theological Conference one of these years in person. Thank you for preaching/teaching the words of Jesus, the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. I've considered myself a Christian all my life, but through studying the words of Jesus and the apostles I realize how much sin I lived in without repentance, and that I was far, truly and sadly far, from the Kingdom of God. I told my husband recently, ‘I need to be converted.’ Thank you for teaching the truths of Scripture despite the powerful force of tradition against it. I (and my whole sweet family) are being changed by God's Holy Spirit. Keep up the good work. Peace in God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.” — *Washington*

“First, I'd like to say how much I have enjoyed your books. Your works on the Trinity and the Kingdom of God have been a huge blessing to me. I have never bought into the idea of the Trinity as it offends logic, common sense, and Scripture. And the idea that you go to heaven when you die is also absent from the Bible. Inadvertently I have ended up in numerous arguments over these topics and it sometimes feels like I'm all alone out here. Having your books (and others) have helped. I was hoping you might take a minute or two and look at a question I have regarding a passage in Luke:

Luke 17:35-37 (KJV) ³⁵Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be **taken** (*paralambano*), and the other **left** (*aphiemi*). ³⁶Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be **taken** (*paralambano*), and the other **left** (*aphiemi*). ³⁷And they answered and said unto him, **Where, Lord?** And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body [carcass] is, thither will the eagles [vultures] be gathered together.’

“I have heard it taught that ‘taken’ means taken to heaven (this is the pre-tribulation position). However, if you read the final verse, Jesus' disciples ask where they will be taken and the answer certainly does not indicate heaven. Since every translation is an interpretation this discrepancy led me to wonder about the accuracy of the translation. I found that the word ‘taken’ can also be rendered as ‘accepted’ and the word ‘left’ can be rendered ‘sent away.’ With these changes the verses seem to make much more sense: ‘Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be **accepted** (*paralambano*), and the other **sent away** (*aphiemi*). ³⁷And they answered and said unto him,

Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body [carcass] is, thither will the eagles [vultures] be gathered together.’ So this is my question: Have I taken too much liberty with the koine Greek or does the grammar allow for my modifications?”

I am sure you are right that “taken” in this passage means taken in to the company of the returning Messiah. And since Jesus will be coming to the earth, if you want to be with Jesus you will want to be on earth!

*2 Thessalonians 1:5-10 is demonstrable proof that Paul imagined no **pre**-Tribulation rapture. Christians will be relieved of present afflictions only at the visible return of Jesus to destroy the wicked and inaugurate the Kingdom of God on earth. Paul certainly could not have written this if he believed that relief would happen to believers seven years earlier! If the **pre-trib. rapture/resurrection** were true, it would mean two second comings. It would also mean that Jesus completely omitted to mention the resurrection/rapture of true believers from his “map” of the future in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21. Jesus instructed believers to flee when the Abomination of Desolation appeared (Matt. 24:15-20). Such teaching would be quite mistaken if in fact believers were going to be removed from the earth! Always remember that the teaching of Jesus is for us all until the end of the age (Matt. 28:19-20), the one Second Coming (see the strong warning in 2 John 7-9 and 1 Tim. 6:3).*

22nd Theological Conference

May 2-5, 2013 (Thurs-Sun.)

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