

Focus on the Kingdom

Vol. 18 No. 1

Anthony Buzzard, editor

October, 2015

“Caution! You are about to enter the no-spin zone”

for basic Bible study. These words introduce the famous Bill O’Reilly on the TV channel Fox News. They apply to your Bible reading too!

In John 16:28, if you are reading the NIV (New International Version) you are being misled! Jesus did not say that he was going *back* to the Father, but that he was going to the Father. There is a huge difference. Jesus had not yet been with the Father in heaven. The same mistake of translation is found in John 13:3 (also in the otherwise more accurate NASU). In that verse the NIV reads that Jesus **returned** to the Father. In fact he was going to the Father.

In Romans 9:5 you are given the impression in most versions that Jesus is “God blessed forever.” See RSV for the correct period after “Christ” (cp. Rom. 1:25; 2 Cor. 11:31). Since the Father is God (some 1300 times in the NT), calling Christ God absolutely, would make two Gods. This breaks the great Bible creed of Deuteronomy 6:4, proclaimed by Jesus as the greatest commandment in Mark 12:29 — that God is a single Person, one YHVH. Jesus said in John 17:3 that the Father is “the only one who is the true God.” Augustine later forged that verse to make it include the Son in the phrase “only true God”! He altered the Bible to read: “You *and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent, as the only true God*” (Augustine’s *Tractates on John*, Tractate 105, newadvent.org/fathers/1701.htm).

Colossians 1:16 reads in many translations, “By him [Jesus] all things were created.” One translation has more accurately “in connection with him.” The margin of NASU reads correctly “in him.” The sense is “with him in intention” or “because of him.” Jesus is certainly the co-creator in the New Creation but there was no Son of God alongside the Father at the time of the Genesis Creation. Isaiah 44:24 had announced that YHVH, who is (7,000 times) the One God of the Bible, was the sole creator of everything. No one was with Him in the Genesis creation. ✧

Did Abraham receive the promise of God?

Not according to Hebrews 11:8-9, 39

Interested?

www.restorationfellowship.org

Jesus Was Jewish and Believed in the God of Israel

A classic work on the doctrine of the Trinity opens with this grand statement: “Our Lord Jesus Christ was a Jew, and the Christian movement was in its beginnings a movement within Judaism. Even the fourth Gospel, written as many scholars believe, for the purpose of showing Jesus to the Greeks, is emphatic in its assertion that ‘salvation is from the Jews’ (John 4:22).

“Christianity presupposes and takes for granted the Jewish belief in God. Its distinctive spiritual dynamic is lost whenever for practical purposes the living God of religion is lost behind the abstractions of philosophical theology. And belief in the living God was the gift of Judea to the world” (*Essays on the Trinity and the Incarnation*, ed. Dr. Rawlinson, 1928, p. 3).

The essay in question then proceeds to contradict and undo its own excellent statement!

An immense amount of peace of mind can be secured by our readers if they will rest in that magnificent concession from a leading Trinitarian scholar! Jesus, he says, was a Jew; Christianity was born in a Jewish environment; the God of Jesus was the God of the Hebrew Bible, the God of Scripture and the one God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. “Do we not all have one Father? Has not one God created us?” (Mal. 2:10).

What beautiful simplicity! How marvelously different from the tortured arguments and conflicts which mark the post-biblical alteration of the monotheism of Jesus into a so-called triune definition of God.

Now note carefully “the elephant in the room.” One of the leading exponents of the later doctrine of the Trinity, Gregory of Nyssa, admits that Trinitarianism is a halfway house between Jewish monotheism and Greek polytheism (Oration 3).

Did you catch that? Please pause and reflect. This immensely influential church father actually rejects the monotheism of Jesus, what he calls “Jewish monotheism”! He is writing at a time when what is called the Christian community had forgotten that it was supposed to pay attention to and obey the words of Jesus! (John 12:44ff; 3:36; 2 John 9; 1 Tim. 6:3; Heb. 5:9).

Jesus warned over and over against those making a claim to be following him, while setting aside his teachings: “Why do you keep calling me ‘lord, lord,’ and yet refuse to do what I say?” (Luke 6:46). Jesus gave as the most important command of all the command that we

are to “Listen, Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.” The Father intervened at the time of the transfiguration of Jesus to thunder from heaven: “This is my beloved Son. Listen to him!” (Matt. 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35). Is the church listening to Jesus when it writes into its constitution and statement of faith that God is “three in one”? How does that agree with Jesus in Mark 12:29, the Jew who agreed with Jesus in Mark 12 and with Paul in 1 Corinthians 8:4-6? “For us Christians there is one God, the Father, and no other God except Him.” These are Paul’s words in a section in which he warns against idols and idolatry.

From correspondence we received this good statement:

“Nor would I argue that Trinitarian monotheism is the same thing as the strict monotheism of Judaism. It clearly isn’t.” Professor J.A.T. Robinson was reporting the facts exactly when he wrote: **“John is as undeviating a witness as any NT writer to the unitary monotheism of Judaism. There is one true God. Everything else is idols (1 John 5:21).”**

That is wonderful. Since Jesus obviously believed in the monotheism of Judaism (Mark 12:29), the key issue is, Are we going to obey Jesus or not? (Heb. 5:9; John 3:36; John 12:44ff).

Eric Chang in his book *The Only True God* (free online: theonlytruegod.org) is very clear that the meaning of God has been changed! This happened when the One God of the Bible became a mysterious “three in one.” Today this antagonizes millions of Jews and Muslims!

Dr. James McGrath sees that the NT clearly does not present us with the Trinity.¹ He speaks rightly of “the essential continuity between early Christianity and Judaism on the subject of God’s oneness.” But then, abandoning the Bible, he also says: “The idea of the Trinity is an extremely helpful one...that God is eternal and God’s nature is love. How can one Person, a monad, be intrinsically loving? It is hard to imagine. The doctrine of the Trinity avoids the lonely solitude of oneness...and incorporates into the very nature of God the idea of interpersonal relationships of love. This was not part of the thinking of either early Judaism or earliest Christianity. However it is a spectacular and inspiring development which may therefore be justified, if not on biblical grounds” (p. 101). God, he says, must have someone else to love from eternity!

Dr. McGrath goes on to warn that theologians must not “simply accept the doctrines and practices of their tradition uncritically, for then **the possibility of a**

prophetic call to change seems altogether excluded” (p. 103-104, emphasis mine).

It seems to me that the academy flirts with the risky business of dishonesty! Love of men and tradition rather than GOD and Scripture. It appears that listening to and obeying and following Jesus and his teachings have been abandoned as the only ultimate standard! But God said “Listen to My Son”! Are we doing this if we fail to pay attention to the unitary monotheism of Jesus which he emphasized, agreeing with the ancient Deuteronomy 6:4, as the one commandment we must not fail to understand and observe. If “anything goes,” how would we define apostasy and defection from the “faith once and for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3)? Do not Protestants claim to go by the Bible alone (*sola scriptura*)? Does not this claim sound dishonest and hollow, if in fact the teachings of Jesus and the “holy apostles” can be set aside?

Jesus anticipated his being made into a second God by first citing the *shema* (Mark 12:29: “the Lord our God is one Lord”) and then immediately adding Psalm 110:1. Psalm 110:1 precisely defined the second lord as “my lord” (*adoni*), not “my Lord” as mistranslated in many versions.

The expert Christologist Dr. James Dunn now has the right answer to the identity of Jesus: “Jesus is not Yahweh, not the God of Israel.”² However in 1977 he had misquoted the second lord of Psalm 110:1 as *Adonai* (Lord) when it is in fact *adoni*, my (non-Deity) lord. He wrote, “The Hebrew of Ps. 110:1 uses two different words — Yahweh and Adonai.”³

Dr. Hurtado makes the same mistake about “lord” in his commentary on Mark when he says the second lord is *Adonai*.⁴ ✧

Jesus and the Scriptures by Kenneth LaPrade, Texas

In our current confused world in which serious consideration of Scriptural truth is often despised as if it were merely the narrow-minded worldview of wild-eyed fanatics, it is refreshing to reflect on Jesus’ attitude toward the Scriptures. When Jesus taught with authority, what was his standard for asserting what he knew to be true? How did he approach the understanding of Scriptures in a first-century culture that was supposedly based on being Biblically minded?

The *Tanakh*, commonly called the Old Testament in Christian Bibles, was grouped in ancient times as three sets of scrolls: *Torah* (the five books of Moses — the law), *Nevi'im* (the prophets), and *Kethuvim* (the writings). In any modern Jewish Bible one can see the

¹ *The Only True God: Early Christian Monotheism in its Jewish Context*, p. 102.

² *Did the First Christians Worship Jesus?* pp. 144, 142.

³ *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament*, p. 393, n.43.

⁴ *Mark, A Good News Commentary*, p. 197.

order of the Scriptural books as they were anciently collected in these three groups. Sometimes “the law” or “the law and the prophets” are phrases used in new covenant writings (like Matthew) to stand for **all** of the *Tanakh*. Since the Psalms were the first part of the *Kethuvim* (the writings), “the Psalms” is a reference in Luke 24:44 to this whole third group of “writings.”

“Don’t assume that I’ve come to undo the Torah or the Prophets! I haven’t come to undo them! I came to bring them to their full realization! Amen! I’m telling you that until heaven and the land pass away, not one iota or a single tittle will pass away from the Torah, not until everything happens!” (Matt. 5:17-18, JAV). The context (v. 19-20) expresses a strong warning toward any who would disregard even the least of the commandments and then teach others to do so.

“And the Scripture cannot be broken” (John 10: 35b, NASB).

“And no power can do away with Scripture” (John 10: 35b, JAV).

“You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures nor the power of God” (Matt. 22:29b, NASB).

“Therefore, when he [Jesus] came into the world, he said, ‘Then I said, ‘Look, I have come! In the roll of the scroll it has been written about me, the one to do your will, O God!’” (Heb. 10: 5a, 7, JAV, quoting Psalm 40:7, 8a).

Then he said to them, “What fools! So slow of heart to put your faith in everything the prophets had spoken about! Wasn’t it necessary for the Messiah to suffer these things, and then to enter into his glory?” Then, beginning with Moses and all the prophets, Jesus explained to them everything in the Scriptures that was related to him...Then they said to each other, “Didn’t our heart burn within us as he spoke to us on the way, as he opened the Scriptures to us?”...Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you! It was necessary for everything that has been written about me in the Torah of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms to be fully realized!” (Luke 24:25 - 27, 32, 44, JAV).

From the beginning of his teaching ministry to his striking resurrection appearances, there is no doubt about how seriously and reverently Jesus regarded every “jot and tittle” of Scriptural revelation; it made no difference whether he quoted Isaiah, Psalms, Genesis, or any other passage from the *Tanakh*. Whether speaking of historical people and literal events or addressing spiritual priorities, required beliefs, and important practices; his absolute confidence in the integrity of Scriptures is unequivocal. When rebuking wrong thinking as well as when denouncing hypocritical behavior, the basis of his

authority was the foundation of the Scriptures. That which was “written” was the unshakable bedrock of Jesus’ faith in the One God as his heavenly Father, his own Messianic identity, the coming Kingdom, and the hope of future resurrection. Examples of this abound in the gospels, and the ensuing impact throughout all new covenant writings is overwhelming. There is also no doubt, in reading the gospels, that Jesus regarded his **own** words, like what was previously written, as absolutely and authoritatively from God (John 12:47-50).

In response Jesus said, “Haven’t you read that ever since the beginning of creation he made them male and female? God said, ‘Because of this, a man will leave behind his father and mother, and unite himself to his woman, and the two will become into one flesh’” (Matt. 19:5-6, JAV, quoting Genesis 1:27, 5:2 and 2:24).

Interestingly, Jesus’ understanding of early Genesis truths was quite straightforward; he did not say or imply, “Billions of years **after** the beginning, our creation myth indicates something vague about human origins and marriage.” If one studies the context of Matthew 19:4-9, it is extremely clear that Jesus specifically understood the heart of God-instituted marriage in much greater depth than did certain Pharisees. He contrasted Moses’ *temporary* permission for divorce in certain cases, due to hardness of heart, with God’s original standard in Genesis, now binding on us. Nor is there any doubt about “the beginning” being the time of Adam and Eve nor about the true meaning of marriage as a reality designed by God Himself. There is nothing unclear either about Jesus’ genuine, godly attitude toward divorce or his wholeheartedly reverential approach toward the Scriptures as being absolutely from God. Just as in his times, the cultural opinions of those who disdainfully toss aside Scriptures (to justify selfishness) cannot ultimately prevail.

Jesus was equally direct and confident when alluding to the days of Noah (Matt. 24:37-38) and the shed blood of Abel (Matt. 23:35), a couple of other realities/events from the earliest chapters of Genesis. He was bold to compare his upcoming death and resurrection to the truth of Jonah’s being three days and three nights in the belly of the great sea monster (Matt. 12:40). He really understood dangerous future times as something others could understand by reading Daniel (Matt. 24:15). In none of these references is Jesus making nebulous allusions to stories from “never - never land”! He repeatedly took the Scriptures at face value, as plain and authoritative.

Thousands of years after the writing of the Bible, we undoubtedly have specific challenges regarding how to understand certain passages within the wide context of all the Scriptures. We might have some questions about how one record could fit with the truth of another record. Why

do God's dealings with people vary from time to time? Among other things, we are now called upon to have mature, spiritual reasoning regarding Christ's accomplishments and our proper response to new covenant realities. We can do all this without holding a disparaging view toward **any** revealed Scriptures. For example, we can understand the real, godly, but provisional purpose of the Torah of Moses, its fulfillment in Christ, and how, as a result, obedience to Christ is living a life free from bondage to "the law" (Gal. 6:2; 1 Cor. 9:21: "Torah of Messiah").

Sometimes the studies of archaeologists, historians, theologians and experts in ancient languages are very helpful in elucidating cultural standards from long ago and the ancient use of figurative language (including strange-sounding idioms). Certain studies help to provide better translations as well as bringing to light other factors relative to Biblical clarity. We can take advantage of such studies without being deceived by the pervasive strands of secular unbelief that relegate divine revelation to the status of human folklore or literature. We can also overcome the fact that centuries of diverse religious traditions have greatly muddled the view of revealed truth in our world.

No obstacles can really compare to Yahweh's ability to enlighten the minds and hearts of those who love Him! We should be greatly encouraged. Jesus grew up within an extremely devout, religious culture, yet it was a world obviously plagued with confused unbelief, twisted political agendas, and spiritual darkness. Nevertheless, Jesus was not dissuaded in the least from total devotion to worshipping Yahweh with an uncompromising faith in the integrity of what had been "written." Likewise, even if we have been bombarded since childhood by a strange mix of secular values and confused religious ideas, we need not be deterred from enthusiastically following Jesus' absolute commitment to the truth of the whole body of Scriptures.

"With all my heart I have sought You;
Do not let me wander from Your commandments.
Your word I have treasured in my heart,
That I may not sin against You.
Blessed are You, O LORD;
Teach me your statutes.
With my lips I have told of all the ordinances of Your
mouth.
I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies,
As much as in all riches.
I will meditate on Your precepts
And regard Your ways.
I shall delight in Your statutes;
I shall not forget your word."

— Psalm 119:10-16 ✧

In Romans 1:3 Paul described the true Jesus as being of the family line of David, descended "according to the flesh." Everyone knew that the Messiah *had to be* a lineal, biological descendant of David. In Jesus' unique case, of course, he was related by blood to David by *his mother*, Mary. Joseph of course was not the biological father of Jesus, but was regarded as legally so.

In Philippians 3:4 Paul used the same language of "flesh" to describe his family and biological link to Israel. In Romans 4:3 he says that Abraham is "our forefather according to the flesh." And in Romans 9:3 he described Israelites as related to him "according to the flesh," that is, by biological ancestry. Paul in Romans 1:3 gave a very careful and accurate description of Jesus as "coming into existence," meaning he was not in existence before his birth. The Son of God was *foreknown* in the Gospel which was predicted by the OT (Rom. 1:1). Paul agreed of course with Peter who spoke of Jesus as "foreknown" (1 Pet. 1:20). No NT writer said that Jesus preexisted, i.e. existed before he began to exist in the womb. There is a perfectly good Greek word for "preexist" (*prouparchein*), but it is never used of the Son of God, Jesus, nor of any other person.

Paul did not say in Romans 1:4 that the Son of God was *not* the Son until his resurrection! That would contradict the rest of Scripture, especially Matthew 1:18, 20, Luke 1:35 and 1 John 5:18: the Son was brought into existence, *genneithei*. Paul called Jesus "Son" from the moment of his existence, begetting in Mary (1:3). Paul then further said that the Son was declared Son of God "*in power*" through the powerful act of God who brought him back from death. **God of course cannot die**, and so no one thought that the Son of God, who died (Rom. 5:10) was actually GOD! That would cause a further disaster by implying that there are *two* who are God, which makes two GODS, breaking the first and major commandment stressed by Jesus in Mark 12:29.

How did the Christian "church fathers" deal with the extremely awkward question that calling Jesus God seemed obviously to involve them in belief in two who are God, thus two Gods? Here was their problem:

"If there is only one God and He is in heaven, how is it possible to claim that Jesus is God? If God is in heaven and Jesus walked the earth (and there is only one God, then Jesus must not be God...Of course, the Christian answer to the dilemma is the doctrine of the Trinity. In one God, there are three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God the Son, the second Person of the Trinity, became man: Jesus...It seemed that there was no way to maintain the divinity [i.e. Deity] of both the Father and the Son (because if God is one without the Trinity of persons, then Jesus is not God the Son)."⁵

⁵ Richard Hogan, *Dissent From the Creed*, 2000, p. 57.

Nevertheless, the illogical Trinity was forced on the Church, if necessary by excommunication of dissenters and the threat of exclusion from the Church. It is a cruel and horrifying story. ✧

Early “Church Fathers” and Futurism

The earliest post-NT writers on prophecy were premillennial, post-tribulational futurists: “Until Augustine in the fourth century, the early church generally held to the premillenarian understanding of biblical eschatology. This millennialism (chiliasm) entailed a futuristic interpretation of Daniel’s seventieth week, the abomination of desolation and the personal Antichrist. And it was post-tribulational...The possibility of a pre-tribulational rapture of the church seems never to have occurred to any one in the early Church.”⁶

Futurism is the belief in a future Great Tribulation (Matt. 24:21=Dan. 12:1) and short reign of a final Antichrist (1 John 2:18, where John does not deny a future antichrist) just prior to the Second Coming. It is sometimes falsely said that futurism is a phenomenon unknown before its appearance in 1580. It was then, so the theory goes, that the Roman Catholic Jesuit Ribera published a long commentary on Revelation restricting most of its prophecies to the reign of a single Antichrist dominating the world for 3½ years just before the return of Christ.

The point of view that futurism began only in 1580 is demonstrably untrue, in the light of the clear evidence of the early church fathers. Some of these had much to say about eschatology, the future. As we will see they also looked for a short reign of Antichrist just before the arrival of Christ to establish the Kingdom on earth.

George Ladd, highly respected writer on eschatology, and agreeing with Gundry cited above, makes the point clearly: “The futuristic interpretation was essentially a return to the method of prophetic truth found in the early fathers, essential to which is the teaching that the Antichrist will be a satanically-inspired world ruler at the end of the age, who would inflict severe persecution upon the church during the Great Tribulation.”⁷

W.R. Kimball agrees that the early church was “generally premillennial, posttribulational and futuristic in their eschatological belief.”⁸ It is most important to add that the pre-tribulation rapture theory is entirely missing from any writer before the 1800’s. It is true that the church fathers did not expect a long period of time to intervene before the appearance of the Antichrist.

However, they believed that the prophecies, read in a straightforward manner, described a *final short period* of intense tribulation *just before* the arrival of Jesus.

This time of intense suffering, in which the church would be involved, would last for 3½ years. The early church fathers definitely did not expect the Beast of Revelation 13 and Daniel 7 to rule for 1260 years. Such a day/year theory, which is most misleading, was not known prior to 1000 AD. It is responsible for a large degree of confusion.

In 1826 modern futurism (still without the pre-tribulation rapture theory) was given publicity with the appearance of a book by Dr. Maitland, curator to the Archbishop of Canterbury. In his *An Enquiry into the Ground on Which the Prophetic Period of Daniel and St. John Has Been Supposed to Consist of 1260 Years*, Maitland rightly refuted the day-year theory and contended that the 1260 days be taken literally, as a short, final period of unequalled persecution of the saints and Israel, just before the Second Coming.

Of these 19th-century futurists George Ladd wrote: “They followed a pattern of prophetic events similar to that found in the early fathers....In fact they appeal to the fathers against the [then] popular historical interpretation for the support of their basic view. A pre-tribulation rapture is utterly unknown by these men” (*Blessed Hope*, p. 39).

It is very important that we become familiar with the actual words of the church fathers to demonstrate their clear futurism (see future edition of *Focus*). It is essential that the false idea that futurism was introduced by the Roman Catholics be corrected. The early church fathers’ type of futurism should make a special appeal to all current premillennialists who agree that it was later developments, particularly under Augustine, which led to the anti-scriptural amillennialist view of prophecy. Amillennialism denies the future 1000-year reign of Christ and the saints in Revelation 20. The work of the ante-Nicene fathers, some of whom wrote in detail on Daniel, Matthew 24 and Revelation, reveals that they read the prophecies in a straightforward, natural way, using the words of Jesus to interpret Daniel. ✧

To our international readers: If you would like to receive *Focus on the Kingdom* by email each month (and save us postage), please send us an email to anthonybuzzard@mindspring.com or sign up at www.restorationfellowship.org with your name and email address.

⁶ Dr. Robert Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, Zondervan, 1973, p. 173.

⁷ *The Blessed Hope*, p. 37.

⁸ *The Rapture: A Question of Timing*, p. 29.

“Like his Jewish contemporaries, Jesus also assumed that the Temple was a place of prayer (Luke 18:9-14; Mark 11:17). He undoubtedly prayed there himself, as indeed he joined in the customary forms of prayer associated with the annual Festivals in Jerusalem, including the Passover celebration which concluded with the singing of the second half of the Hallel (Psalms 116-118; cf. Mark 14:26). **Jesus would have participated in the daily recitation of the Shema** (‘Hear O Israel,’ Deut. 6:4ff: note Mark 12:29ff) and possibly early versions of the *Amidah* (Eighteen benedictions)” (Markus Bockmuehl, *This Jesus*, T&T Clark, 1994, p. 128).

I wrote to this author:

Dr. Bockmuehl, I have very much enjoyed your stimulating *This Jesus*. On p. 161 you speak of the “fundamental relational truth of historic Christian faith, beginning with the Jewish creed of Jesus and the Apostles (Deut. 6:4; Mark 12:29).” You say that our starting point must be to recall that “all good christology is no more nor less than an expression of faith in the God of Israel.” And, I add, thus of course in the God of Jesus who affirmed the Shema, agreeing with a friendly Jew. “Anything less leaves Christians open to the charge of corrupting monotheism.”

But how is the Trinity possibly a confirmation of the Shema? Jews and Muslims do not think so. How can we possibly justify Gregory of Nyssa’s claim that his co-workers on the Trinity denied the “Jewish heresy” in favor of the Trinity? What has happened to the teaching of Jesus, then?

Jesus’ creed, agreeing with the Shema and a friendly Jew, names YHVH as a single Person, surely. It is unitary monotheism, obviously. Can one who claims to be YHVH recite the Shema as the greatest of all commands? Paul in 1 Corinthians 8:6 repeats the same creed, adding *alongside* the one God, the Father, the now superexalted lord Messiah, often “our lord Messiah,” who by definition cannot be YHVH since “my YHVH” and “our YHVH” are language impossibilities. It is surely incredible to alter the creed of Israel by adding another within it! Alongside yes, but not within.

Is not Luke 2:11, “the lord Messiah,” perfectly adequate and sufficient as the authentic birth certificate of Jesus?

Jesus’ brilliant use of Psalm 110:1 seems to anticipate any attempt to make YHVH into 2! *Adoni*, “my lord,” is invariably the non-Deity title all 195 times. ✧

The One God, the Father, One Man Messiah Translation: New Testament with Commentary

Hardback \$20 • Kindle edition \$8
Amazon.com or 1-800-347-4261

For our readers in Washington state who may not be aware, a congregation of the General Conference Church of God was formed a year and a half ago west of the Cascades. The Western Washington Church of God meets at the following locations once each month:

2nd Sunday: Columbian Hall, 6794 Martin Way E., Lacey; 10:00 a.m.

3rd Sunday: Kent Senior Activity Center, 600 E. Smith St., Kent; 10:00 a.m.

4th Sunday: Vancouver YWCA, 3609 Main St., Vancouver; 10:00 a.m.

No Bible studies or worship services on the 1st and 5th Sundays at this time. For more information contact Pastor Robin Todd at robinsings4u@comcast.net, or call him in Olympia at (360) 701-9219. Robin also has information about others around the U.S. looking for contact with other believers. You can see a list of those contact cities/towns by going to www.scatteredbrethren.org and then clicking on the appropriate “region,” or by emailing him at the above address.

Comments

“So I am reading your book about Jesus not being a Trinitarian and your comments on Col. 1:13-15 opened my eyes. I knew that it didn’t make sense to say Jesus was firstborn of the Genesis creation because he didn’t exist yet. The only way Christ existed was in the mind of God. Anyway I see now that he is the first one created in the new creation which has started with Christ being glorified. It just makes so much sense now. Thank you!”
— *Pennsylvania*

“I grew up as a member of the Eastern Orthodox Church and was baptized at the Jehovah’s Witnesses at 25, about 12 years ago. At that time it sounded logical to me what they were preaching. But recently I had an ‘awakening.’ About 4 months ago I decided to read the New Testament as if I didn’t know any doctrine and just see what I understand. After that I started to research some questions I had, to see what others’ understanding is. I don’t really have a ministry yet. A month ago I bought a domain and made a website where I wrote a few articles about my new discoveries. The website is in Romanian language: <http://adevarulbiblic.ro/> I wanted to ask you if there are any groups associated with you in Europe or maybe even in Romania. And if they get together to celebrate the Lord’s Supper, anywhere in Europe. I want to say that it is a great thing what you are doing with your preaching ministry on the internet and through youtube. There are those false ideas that are taken for granted and spread by the big churches for centuries. The truth is rare, but at least with the internet today, if people are really interested in the truth they can

find it, as long as there are people like you who make their research on the Bible public. God bless.” — *Romania*

“Your teaching has changed my life tremendously. About 2 years ago I had left the Branhamite religion (William Branham) and was desperately seeking truth about who God is and who Jesus is. I came across Joel Hemphill’s website, and John Schoenheit’s website and yours as well, and it was just life changing. I have never been more alive and hungry for truth. It’s like a spiritual feast. I just consume scripture and the meaning is so much more pure and vibrant. Please pray for those who are still deceived in my family. I believe that it was only by God’s grace and mercy that I left what I call a deception. The scripture that helped me begin to see my error was Deut. 26:12. William Branham had taught that the tithes only went to your pastor. I remember you saying that you used to be under Armstrong and if I remember correctly Armstrong tied himself to Malachi 4 as did William Branham. For over 2 years now I haven’t had a church to go to. Do you know of any nearby?” — *Tennessee*

“I’ve been reading your New Testament translation and wanted to let you know how much I appreciate reading about the Kingdom in your commentary.” — *Texas*

“I thought I should share with you on how things are progressing this side in South Africa, with regards to preaching the good news about the coming Kingdom of God and teaching on Jesus Christ. Well, most work has been through the social networks and some on one on one. I must say it is hard to preach about the coming Kingdom of God! It is as if we are using different Bibles!!! Somehow the message was lost. And trying to bring it back seems to be the most difficult thing to do especially amongst the church-going Christians! However, by Christ’s strength we will persevere and we won’t give up.” — *South Africa*

“At last the NT has received a great correction thanks to you. Not that I agree with everything — we humans are so difficult to please. But this is a monumental step towards helping the truth rise from the ground where it has fallen. Congratulations.” — *Texas*

“RE: Restoration of Pagan Nations, Daniel 7.27 video: Bravo! A very clear presentation of the Gospel. If the good news of governing the world with Messiah Jesus on a future renewed earth doesn’t excite you, nothing will. The only successful world government is soon to come (Rev. 11:15; 2:26-27; 3:21; 5:9-10; 20:1-6).” — *Youtube*

“Who really cares to worship God in spirit *and* truth? We pray to God for many things, but have you prayed for the truth before? Do you take the time daily or continuously to ask God for the truth, saying to God, ‘I

only want the truth, no matter if it is what I already believe or completely against what I thought to be true. I just want the truth.” — *Georgia*

“Very good and clarifying video on Mark 12:29 — good for linking to others. It’s obvious that the Lord is one, one supreme God the Father, and you point out that Muslims always take God as one for certain. But reading the Quran, I just cannot believe it’s the same Father we are talking about here. Apart from many agreeable verses, there are so many full of punishments to others than Muslims, how to punish, rules of distribution of booties of war, etc.” — *Youtube*

“Thank you for the Sept. issue of *Focus on the Kingdom*. As always the information is what I needed to read to get this “new,” non-trinitarian theology fixed in my mind. The article by Greg Deuble was so down to earth that it made a lot of sense. Except for some technical facts, the comment from Ohio sounded like something I might have written.” — *Canada*

“I was voted in as pastor about four and a half years ago. At that time, the church was a very conservative Oneness congregation. My wife and I had also been in the Oneness movement for over 25 years. About two and a half years ago I was teaching a series of lessons on the ‘Oneness of God.’ It was at that time that I began to see the error of our christological view, and realized that I could not continue to teach it. Needless to say, I was quite perplexed! I had no one to turn to for advice, and was not aware of anyone else who believed that Jesus is the Messiah, the SON of the living God, period. By God’s help and grace, the people of this church have fully embraced the fact that Jesus is not God, and are so thankful to be free from the confusion they had experienced when reading their Bibles!

“At present I am dealing with the ‘speaking in tongues’ issue. As you know, we have always believed it was the ‘initial evidence’ of the Spirit baptism. However, I have come to understand that we have not received the *same* experience that was received in Acts. For example, they spoke in intelligible (known) languages in Acts 2. As I preached revivals, camp meetings and conferences across America and in Canada, I always heard unintelligible (unknown) tongues being spoken (with no interpretation). I have been able to read a couple of your books and have found them to be very helpful and scriptural.” — *Wisconsin*

SAVE THE DATE!
25th Theological Conference
 April 28-May 1, 2016
 Calvin Center, Hampton, GA