

Focus on the Kingdom

Vol. 18 No. 10

Anthony Buzzard, editor

July, 2016

How Did We Get from the Original Teachings of Scripture to the Muddled Multi-Denominational Christianity of Today?

The tragic lapse from apostolic truth leads you away from the original NT community's essentially simple account of the faith — “the faith once and for all delivered to the people of God” (Jude 3). Voices of protest and alarm, among many, may be cited in support of our thesis:

Eberhard Griesebach wrote: “In its encounter with Greek philosophy Christianity became theology. That was the fall of Christianity.”¹ Anglican Canon Goudge: “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.” Anglican Dean Farrar was frank enough to concede that the Church has constantly made a mess of its attempt to interpret the Bible. He notes that “Holy Scripture contains everything necessary for salvation” (6th Article of the Church of England) and that “the plain teachings of Christ are the sole infallible guide.” He then laments the evident failure of expositors to agree on what the Bible says. “Truly, if over the whole extent of what we call ‘religion’ men have an infallible guide, they have — and that to all appearances inevitably — regarded it worse than useless by fallible expositions.”²

Then this marvelous insight from E.F. Scott, D.D.: “Christianity, in the course of the Gentile mission, had changed into another religion. The Church...had forgotten or refused to know what Jesus had actually taught.”³

William Winwood Reade, British historian and philosopher, reinforces our point:

“The church diverged in discipline and dogma more and more widely from its ancient form, till in the second century the Christians of Judea, who had faithfully followed the customs and tenets of the twelve apostles, were informed that they were heretics. During that interval a new religion had arisen. Christianity had conquered paganism, and paganism had corrupted

Christianity. The legends which belonged to Osiris and Apollo had been applied to the life of Jesus. The single Deity of the Jews had been exchanged for the Trinity, which the Egyptians had invented, and which Plato had idealized into a philosophic system. The man who had said ‘Why do you call me good? There is none good but one, that is God’ had now himself been made a god, or the third part of one.”⁴

If the Bible is taken at face value within its brilliant, Jewish apocalyptic setting, “sooner or later the time will come when the simple and natural will be recognized as the true.”⁵

Dr. Martin Werner's summary of the early chaos which overcame the Messianic Jesus and his teaching deserves the widest possible hearing:

“The cause of the Trinitarian-Christological problem, which so perplexed post-Apostolic Christianity, lay in the transition from the apocalyptic Messiah-Son of Man concept of the Primitive Christian eschatological faith, with its sense of imminence, to the new dogma of the Divinity of Jesus. There was certainly no need nor justification...to substitute for the original concept of the Messiah, simply a Hellenistic analogy, such as that of a redeeming Divine Being...Indeed it was wholly invalid. It was a myth behind which the historical Jesus completely disappeared.”⁶

Christian Becker in *Paul's Apocalyptic Gospel* points out that the shift from Jesus' and Paul's apocalyptic Gospel of the Kingdom “constitutes something like a fall of Christendom.” He calls this rightly “a fall from the apocalyptic [i.e. the teaching that Jesus will make a spectacular appearance at his second coming to defeat his enemies and rule on earth] world of early Christianity to Platonic categories of thought.” This had “a tremendous impact on the history of Christian thought,” bringing about “an alienation of Christianity from its original Jewish matrix.”⁷

Translations, particularly some modern ones like the NIV (New International Version), “help” the reader to see things in the New Testament which reinforce his or her impression that later “orthodoxy” is solidly biblical. But this involves “pushing” the Greek text beyond what it

⁴*The Martyrdom of Man*, 1892, p. 230.

⁵Albert Schweitzer, *Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung*, cited by Werner, p.17.

⁶*The Formation of Christian Dogma*, p. 298.

⁷Christian Becker, *Paul's Apocalyptic Gospel: The Coming Triumph of God*, Fortress Press, 1982, pp. 107-8.

¹*Lecture on Christianity and Humanism*, 1938.

²*The Bible, Its Meaning and Supremacy*, Longmans, Green, and Co., 1897, p. 144-145.

³*The Kingdom of God in the New Testament*, Macmillan Co. 1931, p. 156.

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 Scripture of the original community of faith and what from the 2nd century developed as a tragic departure from the biblical orthodoxy of Jesus and Paul.

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 (Mark 12:28ff). On this critical passage of scripture the Church has adopted an alarming posture of silence! (Often it is what we do *not* say which gives away a flaw in our thinking.)

In that marvelously instructive passage of Scripture a Jewish scholar had asked Jesus about what is the *most critically important command of all*. Jesus replied by endorsing the monumentally significant creed of Israel's heritage, the core of all true religion: "The Lord our God is one Lord" (as read from the NT Greek, citing the LXX, Greek version of the OT). This is a unitary monotheistic and certainly not a Trinitarian creed. "One" is a quantifier, a simple, mathematical numeral, and God is defined here, as many, many times in the Hebrew Bible and the NT, as one *single* divine Lord, one Person, one divine Self, one Yahweh, one Father. He is so described by thousands of singular personal pronouns, which as we all know designate a single person. Malachi 2:10 (cp. Isa. 64:8) encapsulates with delightful simplicity the totality of the Bible's view of God as one Person: "Do we not all have one Father? Has not one God created us?"

The importance of this point needs to be repeated: The clash between the original teachings of Jesus and what later emerged as Christianity 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 Bible scholar. In John 17:3 Jesus proposed as the key to the Life of the Age to Come (inadequately rendered in our versions as "eternal life") that we come to recognize and know the Father as "the only one who is true GOD" (cp. John 5:44). In John's writings the Father is equated with God nearly 150 times and in the NT it is obvious that "GOD" (often "*the* GOD" in the original Greek) means the Father and not Jesus. "God" means the Father about 1300 times in our NT. No text out of 11,000 describing God (Elohim, YHWH, Adonai, Theos) *ever* means a triune God. No verse ever speaks of a "God the Son."

The creed of Israel was never Trinitarian. Thus the fact that Jesus affirms and endorses the unitarian creed of Judaism (Mark 12:28ff) ought to provide a provocative and life-changing embarrassment to today's Church,

which has ceased to quote and believe the creed of Jesus.⁸ It has departed from Jesus at the most crucial level of all theological and spiritual endeavor. Thus Christianity is distinguished by the remarkable characteristic that it is the only world religion which begins by discarding its own founder's creed. Mark 12:29, and Jesus as our rabbi-teacher, not just one who provided forgiveness by dying for us, must be reinstated, if Bible study and preaching are to be honest with the Christian documents.

Well did Professor Karl-Heinz Ohlig write:

"There is no indication that Jesus would have understood the "Father," from whom he felt himself to have been sent and to whom he felt himself to be related in a special way, differently from the monotheistic God of Judaism...This consensus of New Testament research need not be more closely examined here."⁹

The Church Fathers Admitted That They Were Rejecting the Jewish Understanding of God

The church fathers, who worked out the later fearfully complicated definitions of God and Jesus in relation to God, found themselves caught in a web of impossibly difficult arguments trying to explain how God can be one and at the same time three:

"But when you have gained the conception of what the distinction is in these, the oneness, again, of the nature admits no division, so that the supremacy of the **one First Cause is not split and cut up into differing Godships**, neither does the statement harmonize with **the Jewish dogma**, but the truth passes in the mean between these two conceptions, destroying **each heresy**, and yet accepting what is useful to it from each. **The Jewish dogma is destroyed** by the acceptance of the Word, and by the belief in the Spirit; while **the polytheistic error** of the Greek school is made to vanish by the unity of the Nature abrogating this imagination of plurality. While yet again, of the **Jewish conception**, let the unity of the Nature stand; and of the Hellenistic, only the distinction as to persons; the remedy against **a profane view** being

⁸"The *shema* was the prayer which all pious Jews were expected to recite three times daily...It occupied a similar special position in late Judaism to the Lord's prayer in Christianity." Dr. Anderson speaks of "the Church that did not any longer recite the *shema*. But here at least in his statement of the first commandment, Jesus stands foursquare within the orbit of Jewish piety" (Hugh Anderson, *New Century Bible Commentary on Mark*, p. 280). But on what authority was this fundamental teaching of Jesus defining the one true God discarded? The Church did not abandon the Lord's prayer! Why abandon his creed?

⁹*One or Three? From the Father of Jesus to the Trinity*, Lang, 2000, p. 31. The title in German was *Ein Gott in Drei Personen? Vom Vater Jesu zum "Mysterium" der Trinität*, Matthias-Grünwald-Verlag, Mainz, 2000.

thus applied, as required, on either side. For it is as if the number of the triad were a remedy in the case of those who are **in error as to the One**, and the assertion of the unity for those whose beliefs are dispersed among a number of divinities.”¹⁰

“In truth, the question you propose is no small one [and] the argument which you state is something like this: *Peter, James, and John are called 3 humans, despite the fact that they share in a single humanity. And there’s nothing absurd in using the word for their nature in the plural...If, then, general usage grants this, and no one forbids us to speak of 2 as 2, or of more than 2 as 3, how is it that we in some way compromise our confession [when] we can speak of 3 gods [the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit]?*”

“The question is, as I said, very difficult to deal with...**even if our reasoning be found unequal to the problem, we must keep forever, firm and unmoved, the tradition which we received by succession from the fathers**, and seek from the Lord the reason which is the advocate of our faith...but if not, **we shall none the less...hold our faith unchangeably.**”¹¹

“The doctrine of the unity of God was at the foundation of the whole Mosaic religion and institute, and also of the Christian religion. ‘This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God.’”¹²

“The theology of Judaism was pure, sublime and devotional — the belief in one supreme, self-existent and all-perfect Being, the creator of heaven and earth was the basis of all the religious institutes of the Israelites; the sole object of their hopes, fears and worship...It was the avowed design of the law of Moses to teach the Israelites that their was only one God and to secure them from that polytheism and idolatry which prevailed among all the nations around about them...Jesus Christ and the apostles retain all that is excellent in the Old Testament revelation.”¹³

A church father of the third century gives away the whole misguided attempt to avoid the plain sense of Scripture and substitute a so-called “spiritual” sense. Origen in his *Stromata* expresses himself in the following manner: “The source of many evils lies in adhering to the carnal or external part of Scripture. Those who do so shall not attain to the Kingdom of God. Let us therefore seek after the spirit and the substantial fruit of the word, which are hidden and mysterious...The Scriptures are of

¹⁰ Church father Gregory of Nyssa, *Oratio Catechitica Magna*, 3.

¹¹ Gregory of Nyssa, *Answer to Ablabius on “Not Three Gods.”*

¹² Dr. G.C. Knapp, *Christian Theology*.

¹³ T. Hartwell Horne, *Introduction to the Critical Study of Holy Scriptures*, vol. 1, p. 143, 149.

little use to those who understand them as they are written.”

We have this reaction from a historian who could see what was happening to the truth of the Bible:

“One would think it impossible that such expressions would drop from the pen of a wise man. But the philosophy which this great man embraced with such zeal, was one of the sources of his delusion. He could not find in the Bible the opinions he had adopted, as long as he interpreted that sacred book according to its literal sense. But Plato, Aristotle, Zeno, and indeed the whole philosophical tribe, could not fail to obtain for their sentiments, a place in the Gospel, when it was interpreted by the wanton inventions of fancy, and upon the supposition of a hidden sense, to which it was possible to give all sorts of forms. Thus all who desired to model Christianity according to their fancy, or their favorite system of philosophy, embraced Origen’s method of interpretation.”¹⁴

One can see how Athanasius, promoting the Trinity, found himself in opposition to the Jewish creed of Jesus:

“I marveled at the effrontery which led the Arians...**to complain like the Jews**, ‘*Why did the Fathers at Nicea use terms not in Scripture, “Of the essence” and “One in essence?”*’...Now such endeavors are nothing else than an obvious token of their defect of reason, **and a copying, as I have said, of Jewish malignity...**

“As then the Jews of that day, for acting thus wickedly and denying the Lord, were with justice deprived of their laws and of the promise made to their fathers, **so the Arians, Judaizing now**, are, in my judgment, in circumstances like those of Caiaphas and the contemporary Pharisees. For, perceiving that their heresy is utterly unreasonable, they invent excuses, ‘*Why was this defined, and not that?*’...”

“But you, **O modern Jews and disciples of Caiaphas**, how many fathers can you assign to your phrases? Not one of the understanding and wise; for all abhor you, but the devil alone; none but he is your father in this apostasy, who both in the beginning sowed you with the seed of this irreligion, and now persuades you to slander the Ecumenical Council, for committing to writing, not your doctrines...For the faith which the Council has confessed in writing, that is the faith of the Catholic Church; to assert this, the blessed Fathers so expressed themselves while condemning the Arian heresy.”¹⁵ ✧

¹⁴ Mosheim, *Doctrine of the Church*, ch. 3.

¹⁵ Athanasius, *A Defense of the Nicene Definition* (De Decretis), 1.1, 1.2, 6.27.

Questions about Preexistence

by Robert Recchia, Florida

As well as contradicting the Bible, preexistence simply defies logic. Consider these questions:

1) At what point in Jesus' earthly ministry was he aware of his preexistence?

2) How could Jesus fully comprehend his preexistence consisting of the same attributes as the Father which were only on loan to him on a limited basis?

3) At what point did Jesus know the decision he was wrestling with to go to the cross was one he had already previously made in his former state?

4) What meaningful fellowship could the Father possibly have had with his preexistent Son who shared the exact same attributes as the Father prior to creation?

5) Was the "decision" of the preexistent Son to "empty himself" of his deity really a decision at all considering he already shared the Father's omniscience?

6) How is it possible for the preexistent Son to empty himself of everything that makes up his entire existence (substance and essence). What would remain?

7) Since Jesus is in his final resurrected body state, where did his preexistent substance and essence go? Back to the Father?

8) At the exact second prior to the Father conceiving Jesus in the womb of Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit, what was the preexistent substance and essence doing? Why was it even necessary?

9) Does the resurrected Jesus long and lament for the days when he existed as the preexistent Son? Does he have any lasting memories of those days? How could he? ✧

Response to a Trinitarian

How to Help Others Think About Defining God Correctly

The one God of Jesus and the Shema was never distant and remote. My point is this: that we surely know that the God of the Hebrew Bible, the God and Father of Jews, was never Triune! It is, I think, an insult to Jews who died for the One God of the Hebrew Bible, and fought hard against the Trinity (not to mention others like Servetus, the biblical unitarian who was murdered by Calvin on the same issue!).

I am retired from a career teaching the Bible languages in a Bible college. I have pondered Scripture for some 55 years. Like you, I want truth. God is one divine Person and that one Person is YHVH, His personal name. YHVH is one Father, never three Persons (Mal. 2:10; Isa. 64:8, and thousands of singular personal pronouns for God).

Jesus is the lord Messiah, not the Lord God, and Luke 2:11 introduces him perfectly. He is not the Lord God, and no one thought God could be born! Jesus is the *anointed* lord. Messiah means "anointed one." God is never anointed.

Jesus affirmed the unitarian creed of his Jewish heritage, agreeing with a friendly Jew in Mark 12. Jesus then went on to cite Psalm 110:1 to define himself as the human Messiah, not GOD! There cannot be two GODs! Jesus is the "my lord" (*adoni*) of Psalm 110:1. That verse gives us a vital key to the whole of Scripture.

"You YHVH are our Father" (Isa. 64:8; 63:16; Mal. 2:10) and thousands of singular pronouns for the One God. Yahweh is not three Persons!

It was the Greek "church fathers," so called, who need some of your tough treatment! It was they, beginning with Justin Martyr (an Arian believing in a preexisting Son) who later from Nicea on (325 AD) turned God into three. Most in church today accept the church fathers without much thought! How many in church can explain their belief in a "beginningless beginning" (eternal generation) for the Son? Millard Erickson, premier Trinitarian, says that a Trinitarian must say "He are three and they is one" to express a definition of God! I don't think God is pleased with this sloppy use of logic.

We need the unitary monotheistic God of the Shema (Deut. 6:4; Mark 12:29) because this is the God whom Jesus worshiped and believed was "the only one who is true God" (John 17:3).

Surely the fact that in the NT God (*o theos*) equals the Father over 1300 times ought to be instructive.

There was no Gnostic chasm in the Hebrew Bible (i.e. no vast gulf between the God of Israel and His faithful people). The God and Father of Jesus, the God of both Testaments, was always approachable, and He is one Father, mediated by His agent the Messiah.

I think you are reading the Gospel of John in a way which (helped by some mistranslation) turns God into two! That breaks the first commandment.

The Trinity is not fair on Jesus who aligned himself with the Shema of the Hebrew Bible (Mark 12:29). So should we, as claiming to follow Jesus.

It is not for us to tell God who is sufficient to atone for our sins! If He approves and gives us the sinless, perfectly obedient human lamb, we should believe it. ✧

The One: In Defense of God

by Pastor Dan Gill

This exciting new book is a persuasive call to return to the genuine monotheism of Jesus and Scripture.

Available at Amazon.com

Going to Heaven at Death Is Not a Christian Idea

Dr. J.A.T. Robinson of Cambridge was fearlessly correct when he stated that “heaven is never in fact used in the Bible for the destination of the dying.”¹⁶ This powerful observation should point to the dire need for a careful examination of what we learned, uncritically, in church. The future of our blighted earth, and the promise of a state of international peace, when nations will “never again learn war” (Isa. 2:2-4), when the Sandhursts and West Points of today’s system will become curio museums, at the time when the Messiah makes his spectacular return to this earth as the royal Davidic king who alone can produce peace — this is rather obviously the compelling goal of the biblical story from Genesis to Revelation. It is also the core of the Christian Gospel of the Kingdom which was preached in advance to Abraham (Gal. 3:8), who has never yet inherited the land promised to him personally, as well as to his “seed” (Acts 7:5; Heb. 11:13, 39). But he will, along with all the faithful.

The land promise, Kingdom of God promise, is the theme which drove Jesus and all the biblical writers. The vision of nations at peace I found rivetingly interesting as soon as I was exposed to Scripture.

The major teaching to be conveyed to children, and anyone who has an inquiring, Berean attitude is this: all the popular language about “going to heaven,” “heaven” as the Christian reward, needs to be expunged from our vocabulary and thinking. The biblical goal is always about inheriting the Kingdom of God in the future when Jesus returns as triumphant Messiah.

It is all about the enormous privilege of joining and assisting Jesus in the reconstruction of world government. A new society is going to be born at the return of Jesus (Rev. 5:10; 2:26-27; 3:21; 20:1-6; Matt. 19:28; 1 Cor. 6:2; Dan. 7:18, 22, 27: “obey them,” the saints).

A Gospel which does not have a strong Messianic flavor, as the Bible’s Gospel has, loses its effectiveness. A “washed-out” Gospel lacks power to change our personalities and make us zealous for Christ. If we talk about people who die as “passing on” or “passing away,” we mislead ourselves and those who hear us.

Meditation on Scripture means internalizing the basic fact of God’s and Jesus’ great plan for a new world society on a renewed earth. When the Devil is bound (Rev. 20:2), society will function in a brand new, exciting way. The hopelessly broken systems of today will be repaired when Jesus assumes governorship over the entire world, a renewed earth which is his by right of inheritance (Ps. 2:8). ✧

¹⁶J.A.T. Robinson, *In the End God*, Fontana Books, 1968, p. 104.

The Unfulfilled Prophecy About the Abomination of Desolation

The prophecies of Daniel, a book beloved by Jesus our Christian rabbi, are the subject of unbelieving assault from various quarters.

The natural grammatical sequence of Gabriel’s message in Daniel 9:24-27 is overlooked by those who see Jesus in the “he” who makes a covenant for seven years (v. 27). The Hebrew word order makes this clearer than most of the English versions. In Hebrew the prince who is to come appears as the last element in the sentence just before the pronoun “he.” We may show this by citing the Jerusalem Bible: “And the city and the sanctuary will be destroyed by the people of the **prince who is to come**, and his [the prince’s] end will come in the flood” (v. 26). The point to be noted is that the masculine possessive pronoun ending on the Hebrew word for “end” refers naturally to the nearest masculine antecedent, the *prince*. The evil prince will come to “his end” in the “flood” of judgment announced by the prophecy (for this see also Dan. 11:45). The next sentence, “he will make a firm covenant...” (v. 27) begins with “he,” which must refer to the masculine antecedents “the prince” and “his.” It would be most strange for the “he” to refer to the Messiah who was “cut off” in verse 26. On no account must we muddle Christ and antichrist. Note also that “his end” (9:26b) cannot fit Titus in AD 70.

It is “he,” the evil prince, who makes a covenant for seven years and breaks it after 3½ years. It is also the same evil prince who carries on a desolating campaign (v. 27). The masculine present participle “desolating” (“he comes desolating”) connects easily with the same masculine subject, the evil prince. Moreover it is the same wicked prince who interferes with the sacrifices in the parallel chapters 7, 8, 11, 12. Once again the organic unity of Daniel is preserved when we see the same wicked desolator in each chapter.

The system we are describing is known as classical futurism. An opposite conclusion is that the 70th week ended in AD 33/34. This can only be arrived at by overlooking the context of Daniel 9:24-27, Daniel’s impassioned prayer for a restoration of the city and the sanctuary (9:1-23). Daniel’s desire was to see a complete and final restoration for his people. Though certainly the death of Jesus and his ministry prepared for this salvation, its fulfillment for the city and people of Israel awaits the second coming. Most significant of all, then, is the teaching of Jesus himself, who refers to Daniel for information about the future. Directing us to Daniel 9:26-27, 11:31, 12:11, and 8:13, Jesus connects the Abomination of Desolation with the time of unparalleled tribulation which will happen just prior to the second coming. Jesus saw the great tribulation as a brief time of

extreme distress just prior to his future arrival in glory (Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21).

The Abomination of Desolation, standing where *he* ought not to (Mark 13:14: the masculine participle points to a person or image of a person) will trigger the time of unprecedented tribulation (Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21), and it will be followed immediately by cosmic signs (Matt. 24:29) and the second coming.

A serious lapse of belief occurs when some fail to see that Jesus reads the Abomination of Desolation described by Daniel as a *future* event. On no account was the prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27 fulfilled in BC times, the time of the persecuting Antiochus Epiphanes IV. If Jesus is not our interpreter, we reject him as teacher. When describing the future Abomination of Desolation, Jesus explicitly refers to the book of Daniel. Some “unbelieving” scholarship gets rid of this prophecy by giving it its fulfillment in the second century BC.

The book of Revelation is built around the second half of Daniel’s final period of 7 years. Once again Jesus is to be our rabbi and interpreter. In Revelation 11:1-3 Jesus describes a trampling by hostile forces for a period of 42 months or 1260 days (Luke 21:24; Dan. 8:13; Zech. 12:3, LXX). We see here the second half of Daniel’s 70th “week.” Apparently the first half of that 70th “week” will involve a false treaty made between a Middle Eastern enemy of Israel who will offer deceptive plans for peace. When these fail, the great tribulation will be unleashed, and be brought to an end by the future arrival of Jesus. Matthew 24:29 is a major key in this scheme. Cosmic signs will follow *immediately* at the end of the great tribulation. Jesus will then be seen arriving in power and glory. He will gather his saints from all over the world, including those true believers who are still alive at that future time, and the faithful dead of all the ages who will be resurrected at Christ’s coming (1 Cor. 15:23; Rev. 11:15-18).

There will be no *pre*-tribulation catching up of the saints. A single catching up to meet the lord in the air will occur at the end of the Great Tribulation. Then will follow a Messianic banquet, the organization of the theocratic Kingdom, and very probably the saints will march into Jerusalem from the east with Messiah at their head.

Our point may be summarized as follows:

*Jesus places the awful horror in the future yet.
In Daniel’s seventieth week the abomination will be set;
That the seventieth week is future, therefore, let us not
forget. ✧*

Comments

• “Anthony Buzzard is on fire with evil and the spirit of the antichrist. Young men and women are being trained to deny the clear teachings of scripture and to promote heresy — sad. Jesus is our GOD and Savior.” — *Youtube*

• “I am 24 and I just wanted to say thanks for the information you have put up on the net. It’s very helpful, especially with people who were trying to convince me about Jesus being the archangel Michael.” — *Trinidad*

• “I am currently a ‘member’ of Jehovah’s Witnesses movement, but for some time I have been visiting your website for answers in regard to Bible teachings. I would like to express my thanks for the effort and thorough research you have been doing. But I must admit that every time I am reading new material new questions come up to my mind. As I have decided to scrap all JW non-scriptural doctrines I am struggling to put all new information in proper biblical perspective. I have no longer a problem in accepting the human Messiah although it was a shocking discovery.” — *England*

• “We are currently living in Sweden and intend to return to France in order to proclaim the message of the Kingdom. It is during our time in Sweden (four years) in almost total isolation that we have discovered the truth. And we now believe it is time to begin to share this truth. Would you kindly support us in prayer.” — *Sweden*

• “I was brought up from the age of 7 as Jehovah’s Witness. Around 3 years ago, I was attempting to convert my brother to join and he told me to do my research into the 607 to 1914 prophecy. I was shocked to find the date of the first destruction of Jerusalem was not 607 BC. Then, he shared with me about Jesus not being the mediator of the Great Crowd, according to JW belief. I went to my elders in my congregation and they had no answer, except to say my faith was weak. After other revelations that made me realise this was not the truth, I left. I then went to an evangelical church for a while as that was what my brother had joined. However, as I continued to study, I realised that I could not accept the Trinity as it didn’t make scriptural sense. I’ve been watching so many of your videos on YouTube and believe that you base your teaching on the bible and are not dogmatic unless it’s unscriptural. I fear being misled again. I’m desperate to find the truth and have been trying to share with my wife the need to see Christ as central and she is beginning to listen.” — *England*

• “Thank you for sharing the *Focus on the Kingdom* with me. I enjoy these very much so. Enlightening, educational, inspirational and moving in my faith. I wanted you to know I watched all the 21st-Century Reformation videos and all are absolutely fantastic. These teachings and seminars you and like minded

individuals provide are exactly what is missing in most denominational churches today. Thank you so much for getting to the core of the Gospel and spreading the teachings of the coming Kingdom. The Galatians video is spot on and described in such a beautiful way. I was moved perhaps with the Holy Spirit as it literally gave me chills thinking about the old laws and the New Covenant we are in today. I am proud to be following Jesus Christ and making the ever delightful discovery of what true Christianity is all about.” — *Mexico*

- “Even the most casual of online investigations into the Trinity will inevitably bring the internaut into contact with a distinguished, scholarly, bespectacled English gentleman called Anthony Buzzard. He soon struck me as being the voice of reason amidst all the hubbub and confusion out there so I began to consider what he was teaching. My fondest memory of those three weeks spent researching the Trinity in May 2013 is his series of six Library Talks with Dan Gill. A double act comprising two straight men is indeed a novel approach to Bible ministry. The first of those talks examines Jesus’ discussion with the scribe in Mark 12:28ff. This was the passage which began to blow the lid off the Trinitarian dogma to which I was attached and expose it for the nonsense that it is. It had never before occurred to me that if the monotheistic creed of an orthodox Jewish scribe is approved and affirmed by Jesus then to consider him to be a Trinitarian is to award him an unwanted and unwarranted honorary D.D. in doctrinal dissimulation.

“The Trinitarian blinkers were starting to come off. They could no longer conceal the obvious fact that Jesus has a God (Eph 1:17). Now that I could read the Scriptures with much clearer vision I noticed that this had been true of Jesus in his mortal state (Matt. 27:46), was still the case once he had been immortalized (John 20:17) and remains the case now that he is glorified (Rev. 3:12). That put paid to the Trinitarian belief that Jesus regained his preexistent status of equality with God, once glorified, so I ditched that particular item of baggage. The notion of a preexistent Son was later offloaded too. The key Scriptures here were Luke 1:35, 2 Samuel 7:14 and 1 Peter 1:20. One of the many advantages of believing the elementary truths of Scripture is being able to travel light.

“In one of those Library Talks Anthony and Dan likened Trinitarian dogma to a sticker with which the church fathers had covered Jesus up. This needed to be removed if his true identity was to be rediscovered. So I began looking at the historical development of those doctrines. Jude had spoken of “the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints” (Jude 3) and this seemed to question the need for further doctrinal development in the form of extra-biblical, post-biblical creedal statements adding nothing but complexity. What if, as was already becoming apparent to me, they also

happened to be anti-biblical? They certainly looked suspiciously unlike the simple confessions of faith of earlier Christians recorded in the NT (John 1:49; 6:69; Matt. 16:16; John 11:27; Acts 8:37). Once the sticker was off it was evident that the authors of those creeds had issued Jesus with a fraudulent Greek identity card bearing a false and unflattering image making him look infinitely older than he really is.

“Then came the little matter of sifting through all the proof texts used and abused to prop up the Trinity. All told there were over a hundred of them to work through. The last one to be toppled was John 20:28 but I had already decided to abandon Trinitarianism before that difficulty was eventually resolved. The weight of the rest of the evidence was so overwhelming that there was no point in delaying the decision any longer. This would have been about as unwise as refusing to leave a sinking ship so long as a bit of mast remained visible above the surface of the water.” — *France*

Oklahoma!

The Church of God General Conference, in partnership with Anthony Buzzard and the Restoration Fellowship, are launching a new congregation in Oklahoma City. The first meeting will take place on Sunday, July 17th at the Oklahoma City Elks Lodge, 5550 NW 72nd Street, starting at 10:00 a.m. Leading the new congregation will be Pastor Scott Perciful. For more details he can be reached by phone or email. Phone is (918) 863-5656; email is sp@scottperciful.com We look forward to seeing you there as we share our common faith in the coming Kingdom of God and the things concerning the Messiah Jesus.

The Western Washington Church of God meets at the following locations once each month:

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

3rd Sunday: YWCA, 3609 Main St., Vancouver; 10:00 a.m.

4th Sunday: Columbian Hall, 6794 Martin Way, Olympia; 10:00 a.m.

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.