

Focus on the Kingdom

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Anthony Buzzard, editor

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Resurrection Connections

by Kenneth LaPrade, Texas

On April 21, 2019, I was among a small Christian fellowship group in a home in northern Mexico, rejoicing in the resurrection of Jesus. I was thankfully aware that billions of people worldwide were considering this history-changing event from almost 2,000 years ago. Nevertheless, I was also keenly aware that, in all likelihood, very few were connecting Jesus' decisive victory, through death and resurrection, to God's overall Kingdom agenda! The Scriptures clearly do not fail to connect Jesus' resurrection to the big picture of God's purposes.

Several Kingdom of God writers and teachers have consistently pointed out the following historical irony. Whereas the first century Jews (and Jesus' earliest disciples) were apparently oblivious to the Scriptural need for Messiah to die for the sins of others and be raised from death (Ps. 22 and Isa. 52:13-53:12), they were quite confident that a victorious Messiah would ultimately prevail over God's enemies (Isa. 11:1-10) and that there would be a general resurrection of the dead in the future (Dan. 12:1-3). Conversely, during centuries of Christendom's development, Jesus' death and resurrection have been embraced and celebrated; nevertheless, a tremendous disconnect between his past accomplishments and the assured future hope has muddled the potential for genuine faith! This current dilemma, which sadly exchanges biblical hope for the hazy, paganized falsity of the "die and go to heaven" religion (so pervasive in modern culture), is not due to a lack of forthright truth on God's part!

Despite such historical and cultural tragedies, one can take heart from the following Scriptural considerations. Many of us are now humbly, currently aware that even as avid Bible readers, one can be in the dark about certain vital topics for years (due to entrenched faulty paradigms), and then emerge into an enlightened understanding! Hallelujah!

"Now brothers and sisters, I want to remind you about the Gospel I proclaimed to you. You accepted it, and you are standing firmly in it. It is through this Gospel that you are being saved, if, that is, you hold on to the message which I preached as Gospel to you. Otherwise your belief was futile! I passed on to you what I myself had also received, as items among those of first importance: the message that Messiah died for our sins, according to Scripture; that he was buried and that

he was raised from the dead on the third day, again, in accordance with Scripture" (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

These basic truths concerning Jesus' death and resurrection are **among** realities of first importance, but they do not comprise the totality of core, important Gospel truths. A perusal of Paul's preaching in Acts (Acts 14:22; 19:8; 28:23, 31) and his letters reveal that repentance in light of the coming Kingdom was integral to the Gospel as declared by Paul, in total agreement with Jesus' announcement (Matt. 4:17). The magnificent context of the whole of chapter 15 of 1st Corinthians makes it obvious that Jesus' resurrection is tightly linked to the Kingdom of God future resurrection of all faithful believers. In essence, one can perceive clearly that if Christ was not raised, there is **no** future hope that others will be raised at his return! Logically, if not, why get baptized? (v. 29).

It might be instructive to consider Jesus' wise, patient, repetitive model (both before and after his resurrection) in dealing with those disciples who were desirous to be on track, but reluctant to believe God's declared sequence of truth, as clarified by Jesus.

Perhaps after more than a full year of Kingdom of God ministry with the twelve, at Caesarea Philippi, Jesus entered a new phase, so to speak, of ministry work. After Peter's confession of Jesus' identity ("the Messiah, the Son of the living God," Matt. 16:16), Jesus announced bold prophecies about his upcoming accomplishments. Three such declarations are recorded in all three of the Synoptic Gospels: Matthew, Mark, and Luke. If Jesus had proclaimed in his latter ministry that he was going up to Jerusalem to sit on David's throne and vanquish God's foes, there would have been no surprises among his disciples! Luke 19:11, preceding an important parable regarding a **delay** in timing regarding the future Kingdom, reflects their thinking! Such a rut in their mindset persisted despite Jesus' continued, bold prophecies! His prophecies revealed clearly what their minds were not close to being ready to grasp. Here is the first prophecy:

"From that time forward Jesus **began** to make it clear to his disciples that it was necessary for him to go to Jerusalem, and endure great suffering at the hands of the elders, chief priests, and experts on Jewish teachings, and be killed, and on the third day be raised" (Matt. 16:21. This first prediction is also in Mark 8:31-33 and Luke 9:22).

Of course, this event is when Peter objected and was sternly rebuked by Jesus, "because you [Peter] are not

setting your mind on God's way of thinking, but on human thinking" (Matt. 16:23).

The second such recorded prophecy was after the vision of the transfiguration and after the deliverance of a demonized boy: "They left there and were passing through Galilee. But Jesus didn't want anyone to know, because he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, 'The Son of Man is going to be betrayed by human hands. They will kill him, and then three days after being killed he will rise.' But they didn't understand the teaching and were afraid to ask him" (Mark 9:30-32. This second prediction is also in Matt. 17:22-23 and Luke 9:43b-45).

Here is the third prediction, in Luke (also recorded in Matt. 20:17-19 and Mark 10:32-34): "Then he took the Twelve aside and said to them, 'Pay attention: we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that's written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. He will be handed over to the pagan authorities, ridiculed, mistreated, and spat on. After flogging him, they will kill him, yet on the third day he will rise again.' However, they understood none of these things. The significance of this remark was hidden from them, and so they didn't even begin to understand what he meant" (Luke 18:31-34).

As many Bible readers already know, it took the powerful resurrection itself — plus many convincing proofs and explanations during 40 days (after the resurrection) for the disciples in general to be fully persuaded about what had occurred. Early on that resurrection Sunday morning, angels at the empty tomb reminded the women of Jesus' prophetic words; it seems that even simple, basic recall of what Jesus actually said was slow to kick in!

"But the men [two angels in the context] said to them, 'Why are you searching among the dead for one who is living? He's not here, but has been raised! Don't you remember? While he was still in Galilee, he told you that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and would be crucified, and on the third day rise again.' Then they remembered his words" (Luke 24:5b-8).

And Matthew 28:6 shows an angel saying, "he has been raised, **just as he said.**"

On that Sunday when Jesus was resurrected, according to Luke 24, Jesus spoke anonymously to two discouraged disciples on the road to Emmaus, and then later in Jerusalem to a group including the eleven and others. He boldly challenged their unbelief, while honing in on their failure to grasp the big picture of the Scriptures, that the Messiah was prophesied to suffer, "and would rise from the dead on the third day" (Luke 24:46).

Hosea 6:2 speaks of Israel, represented by the Messiah, rising **on the third day**. Later Peter and Paul

clearly recognized that Psalm 16:10 speaks of Messiah not remaining in a state of death long enough to undergo bodily deterioration: Acts 2:27, 29-32 and 13:35-38.

On top of that connection, Jesus made it prophetically clear that a specific three-day typology was present in the example of Jonah (Jonah 1:17; Matt. 12:38-40). Also, perhaps Abraham's intended sacrifice of Isaac "on the third day" (Gen. 22:4) lends itself to such an implied typology. (Genesis 22:1-19 as compared to Hebrews 11:17-19 might imply this possibility.)

Of course, Jesus' bold prophecies (related in this brief study) about his impending torture, violent death, (even the specific means of death — by crucifixion, John 12:32-33), and his **third day** resurrection eventually became recorded as Scripture in the New Covenant writings. What was starkly revealed came to pass exactly as foretold — in spite of the continuous bad misunderstandings of many Judeans (and also of Jesus' disciples): "So the crowd answered him, 'We have heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that he must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?'" (John 12:34).

As noted at the beginning of this study, modern Christianity tends to affirm what was previously misunderstood about Jesus' death and resurrection, while currently misunderstanding the future Kingdom hope of Israel and biblical Christians! Jesus' careful, patient, spoken model successfully remedied the unbelief of some regarding his (now) past accomplishments. Nowadays, by courageously persisting in imitating Jesus' tenacity to speak up repeatedly (according to Scriptural truth), we have the opportunity to lovingly help others obediently embrace the future hope of God's coming Kingdom on earth, a reality which is so misunderstood by vast multitudes! (see Dan. 2:44; 7:18, 22, 27). ✧

The Trinity and Singular Personal Pronouns

by Carlos Xavier

The Trinity God is defined as 3 Persons in 1 "Being" or "Essence" (*ousia*). Hence, the formulation "3 Who's in 1 What" is used by some, highlighting the impersonal nature (a "What") of the Trinity God as a whole.

This has been the standard, classic, historical orthodox position for hundreds of years. But modern-day apologists, like my recent debate opponents Jonathan McLatchie and Ethan Smith, argue that singular personal pronouns (I, Me, Him, He, His, etc.) can be used for all 3 Persons at the same time. For example, they claim that in Isaiah 44:24: "I, the LORD, am the Maker of all things, stretching out the heavens by

Myself and spreading out the earth all alone,” the “I” and “Myself” there can refer to the Trinity.

As apologist James White puts it in his book *The Forgotten Trinity*, “the Father is identified as Yahweh. But I believe that the Bible identifies Jesus as Yahweh, as well, and the spirit is the spirit of Yahweh. Each of these three **persons** shares the one divine name, Yahweh.” Yet in the same book White also says, “I believe the name Yahweh refers to the very divine **Being**, the eternal God, who created everything” (p. 132).

The noted evangelical Carl Henry warns his fellow Trinitarians not to fall into this clear contradiction, “**3x = 1x**”:

“Some critics consider orthodox representations of the Trinity a mathematical monstrosity; the doctrine, they contend, is as fallacious in its claim for the three-in-one God as is the formula $3x = 1x$. But this description patently distorts the doctrine. Christian theology affirms neither that three gods are one God nor that three isolated persons are one God. Rather, it affirms three eternal personal distinctions in the one God, in short, $3x$ in $1y$. Such a formulation is both intelligible and non-contradictory.”¹

The fact is, as another noted evangelical Dr. Millard Erickson admitted, many self-professed Christians simply “do not know what the doctrine says.”² The truth is that no one can! That’s because the architects of the Trinity (the Cappadocian Fathers and later Augustine and Aquinas) created what I call a “slippery fish” of a doctrine that requires its defenders to constantly move the goalposts, becoming moving targets.

John Biddle, “the Father of English Unitarianism,” called the Trinity “an Error in counting or numbering; which, when argued, is of all others the most brutal and inexcusable; and if you cannot understand it you cannot be a person.”

Later, Joseph Priestley added that “It must be universally true, that 3 things to which the same definition applies can never make only 1 thing to which the same definition applies...If, therefore, the 3 persons are each of them perfect God, they must still be 3 Gods; and to say that there are only 1 God is as much a contradiction, as to say that 3 men are not 3 men, but only 1 man.”

And the little-known English unitarian preacher Lant Carpenter said it best when he accused them of talking “in a language not possible to be understood...Again, whether the terms Essence, and Substance have the same signification, or whether they signify different things, I think of little importance, and

not worth a particular discussion. It is high time that all such metaphysical terms should be banished from Christian professions, and Christian debates.” ✧

The Fence: The Horror of Abortion

by Barbara Buzzard

This is that fence which you must never ever sit on or be indecisive about. This fence has spikes that will cause you pain, if not now, in the future. This is that fence which divides right from wrong and good from evil. This is that fence which renders silly the logic of not getting involved. It is, of course, a wall, one side of which is known as “choice.” Let us be clear; the “choice” is to kill or not to kill. Which side of the fence you are on is critical because it can reveal a lack of consistency in your life — a non-integration of your beliefs and your practices. Don’t imagine that a position on the fence is neutral. The fence cannot be straddled; it demands an answer to the “how do we then live?” question. Sitting on that fence permits the sin of silence. Ignorance is no option. Looking the other way leaves one at risk of judgment. God cannot be removed from the abortion controversy. We must all ask if our views harmonize with our actions and even more importantly, *with His views*. Christians must bear witness to God’s Truths, wherever they are found and whether or not a moral meltdown is happening all around us.³

Truth is woven into deceptions in a clever and profound way. The language surrounding abortion has been hugely calculated to deceive, to blind, and to misdirect. In fact, as I write, a news article speaks of pregnancy as being pathological, comparing the unborn to a parasite. *Have we been so deceived that we think pro-choice is the opposite of pro-life? The opposite of life is death.* Pro-choice is anti-life. The very concept of “pro-choice” is an absurdity. Even buying into the jargon used is enough to dismantle people’s reason. The faulty thinking that plagues women considering an abortion is exposed in the phrase: “**if** I have this child.” The reality is that any mother considering an abortion *already* has a child.

The Power of Semantics

It was revealed recently that National Public Radio (NPR) may only speak of abortion with the allowed vocabulary. They may not speak of partial birth abortion or dismemberment. It seems the philosophy is that the gruesome is only to be *done, but not spoken of*. The clever use of language can establish the terms of the discussion (you may not show that ultrasound here; you

¹ *God, Revelation and Authority*, Vol. 5: *The God Who Stands and Stays*, p. 165.

² *God in Three Persons*, p. 46.

³ The Guttmacher Institute, research arm of Planned Parenthood, states that nearly two-thirds of women who have abortions consider themselves Christian.

may not advertise here), and it also can suppress your response. You may not say babies; you must say fetuses. You must say that POC means “products of conception” rather than “pieces of children,” as they are often referred to by abortion employees. The language has been sanitized to make abortion palatable.

“Ever since 1970, the policy of semantic gymnastics has been propagated so often and with such fervor that it has become deeply embedded in the public consciousness. What once had been ‘the scientific fact which everyone really knew, that human life begins at conception’ has been — through countless repetitions — obscured and reduced to the suspect level of an outmoded, sectarian bias. Thanks to the power of ‘the big lie,’ no longer does everyone know that human life begins at conception.”⁴

If word games can be used to deny the humanity of the unborn, they can also be used to cover up the fact that abortion is killing. “The reason particular groups are earmarked for large-scale semantic devaluation and massive physical oppression is closely linked to ideology.”⁵ And as Solzhenitsyn writes: “Ideology — that is what gives evildoing its long-sought justification and gives the evildoer the necessary steadfastness and determination.”⁶

“90 percent of the news media elite have assimilated ‘right to choose’ rhetoric as a prominent tenet of their social gospel.”⁷ This is a brilliantly evil choice of words as it allows us to name things without bringing to mind a mental image of what actually happens. Let us remember some of the euphemistic language used by the Nazis for their concentration camps: resettlement and rehabilitation. What a brilliant euphemism is the term “healthcare”! And yet 92 out of 97 Planned Parenthood centers refused prenatal care to mothers seeking it.⁸

Semantic Gymnastics

A *California Medicine* editorial acknowledges that “very considerable semantic gymnastics” are required to avoid the scientific fact which everyone really knows, that “human life begins at conception” and “to rationalize abortion as anything but taking a human life.” Such “a schizophrenic sort of subterfuge is necessary,” the editorial emphasizes, in order to obtain acceptance of abortion as “moral, right and even necessary.”⁹

⁴ William Brennan, *Dehumanizing the Vulnerable: When Word Games Take Lives*, p. 9.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 11

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 11-12.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 17, Robert Lichter study.

⁸ “The latest expose of Planned Parenthood,” LifeNews.com, 1/24/17

⁹ “A New Ethic for Medicine and Society,” *California Medicine*, 1970.

What are the devastating effects of words on deeds? William Brennan argues that it is **toxicity of thought** and that this is pervasive, crossing generational lines. He sees it as semantic venom, calling what is a living, developing miniature human an entity with no rights whatsoever.¹⁰ The rhetoric of “lives not worth living” is being propounded on our college campuses and in our medical schools! Verbal engineering desensitizes us to the horrors of dismemberment. Semantic corruption lends to the adulteration of thought itself. And we must always be on our guard, recognizing the fact that those who control the language control thought.

*Have you noticed that pro-choice advocates only validate **one** choice! How odd is that?*

Ray Comfort pushes his way through the garbled nonsense when he asks this fill-in-the-blank question: When is it OK to kill a baby in the womb?

Unplanned

The pro-life movie *Unplanned* opened in April of this year. It is the true story of Planned Parenthood clinic director Abby Johnson who, after witnessing an ultrasound-guided abortion, left the industry and became a passionate advocate for life. Although she had worked at Planned Parenthood for years and served as a director, she had not *seen* an abortion. What she saw changed everything. She saw an unimaginable act of violence.

While the movie’s emphasis is on the truth of the brutality of abortion, it is also on forgiveness and helping women to heal. It depicts what a peaceful, prayerful pro-life protest looks like. The pro-life protesters were doing what they were doing out of love, not condemnation, as is shown by the fact that when Abby’s views changed she knew where to run. She ran to them because they had always shown her love.

One physician’s review of the movie: “The procedure [abortion] really only complicates grief, which is why it is never the right answer.” Another doctor said: “Abortion does not empower women; **truth empowers women.**”

Abby writes, “self deception is a powerful force.”¹¹ She tried to reconcile her desire to help women with the barbaric act of killing an innocent — until it broke her. She faced the hypocrisy of what so many maintain: that they can personally hate abortion and yet be proponents of choice. As one writer so accurately says, that is like approving your neighbor’s child abuse while saying that you are personally against child abuse.

Abby on the fence on her last day of work at the clinic: “I approached the Planned Parenthood fence and drove through the open gate. It felt as if darkness were

¹⁰ William Brennan, *Dehumanizing the Vulnerable*

¹¹ Author M. Scott Peck affirms that self deception is the most profoundly awful and dangerous form of deception.

descending on me as I entered. Dread — that’s what I was feeling. Even though I’m now appalled at what happens inside this fence, I’m crossing through it as if everything is fine. But it’s not fine. This is a death house. A prison. And I’ve been both prison guard and prisoner...I’d been a pawn in a game.”¹²

“It had taken me eight years to discover that by aligning myself with an organization that performed abortions, I had condemned myself to be part of the very thing I said I wanted to decrease. Since that decision, it has been a long, slow slide into darkness. It was all so clear to me now. I’d lived in that darkness for eight years, and in it I’d lost my day vision. I had harbored by own dark secrets. I had built fences that separated me from my parents, my husband, my friends. I’d fenced myself off from my own conscience, leaving me adrift and confused in shadowy places. And I had fenced myself off from the connection to God that I longed for. Today peace was flooding in, washing away the rubble of that shattered fence.”¹³

“It was here I’d escorted women into the hands of Planned Parenthood. It was here I’d casually scheduled the deaths of countless children...And finally God put me face-to-face with the mangled brutality of the ultrasound-guided abortion, so I could see the destruction of life with my own eyes.”¹⁴

Abortion vs. Scripture

Shedding innocent blood is the definition of murder. Murder is condemned everywhere in Scripture. It is an abomination. The biblical legal system required that when a life was taken, the penalty was life for life, which included life for unborn life.

Without question the Bible recognizes life in the womb.¹⁵ Without question the Bible recognizes that infanticide is an abhorrent practice. Without question life is sacred. If our views on this subject are not aligned with our Father’s, that should frighten us. Approving of abortion is clearly hostile to biblical teaching. Malignant rhetoric assaults our ears; perhaps the most hidden and the best loved of all hate speech. And, of course, abortion is the most egregious human rights violation there could be.

It is very noteworthy that the words “born again” have at their core birth, that sacred act which is now being defiled. By approving or being silent about the shedding of innocent blood we *reject* the

¹² *Unplanned*, Abby Johnson with Cindy Lambert, p. 143

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 173

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 189, 202

¹⁵ Ex. 21:22; Lev. 17:11; Ps. 22:9-10; 127:3; 139:13-16; Prov. 6:16-19; Isa. 44:24; 49:5; Jer. 1:4-5; Mat. 5:21; Mark 7:20-21; Luke 1:15-17; 26-27, 30-37, 41; John 8:44; Rom. 1:28-29; 11:32; 1 John 3:15; Rev. 22:15.

sacrifice of Jesus. Which is to say that Christians must never approve of abortion.

The Fence, the Church, and Pastors

Tragically we have become accustomed to the slaughtering of 5,000 babies a day. Our Supreme Court sanctions the horror of partial birth abortions.

“And yet even in the face of this abomination, the churches of America, the pastors of America, are silent. Where is the cry of outrage? Where is the indignation of the people of God? We, too, have known the evil from its start. Dumpsters full of ravaged infant bodies stand in mute testimony to our failure and to our guilt.”¹⁶

Prominent Pastor R.C. Sproul, Jr. puts it this way: “it’s not that the church has failed; it’s that it hasn’t even tried.” He describes abortion as the most significant, serious, dreadful reality in the history of the world.

Dr. Laurence White: “The New Testament speaks of unique moments of divine destiny, when God confronts His people with a challenge, and offers them an opportunity. The Greek word for such a moment of divine destiny is *Kairos*. I believe that the Christian church in America has come to such a time, a Biblical *Kairos*. A moment of divine destiny.

“If we fail to meet this challenge, and rise to this opportunity, our nation will not survive. It is as simple, and as stark as that. This is our moment, my friends. Our time of testing. I pray that we may be equal to the challenge of these days; that we may be within this dying culture the stinging salt that stops the decay of death; the shining light that dispels the darkness of doubt and despair, that America may once again be the gleaming city set high upon a hill, that shines as a beacon light of life and hope for this nation and for every nation.”¹⁷

Back to the Fence

The real heroes in the Abby Johnson story were the prayer warriors who covered that Planned Parenthood facility and all who entered it with unrelenting sacrificial prayers, and with incredible devotion. In fact, Abby says that her conversion was the result of years of prayer over her clinic.¹⁸ One ex-policeman had been earnestly praying for Abby for years. He also was faithful two days a week to stand and pray at the fence. When Abby crossed over to his side of the fence, he cried with joy. These men and women are truly heroes.

¹⁶ Dr. Laurence White, “The Sin of Silence,” address delivered at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Sep. 6, 2000.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Abby and her husband have a nonprofit ministry to assist former abortion workers: And Then There Were None

Similarly, John Barros, a cancer survivor, has dedicated his life to trying to save the lives of others. And he has saved over 1,000 in eight years. How? By standing and counseling, giving information and giving an option to the women entering an abortion facility. He stands, sings, and prays nine hours a day, six days a week, begging women not to go through with the procedure (and this is in Florida's blistering heat). See his story: John Barros, Who Will Stand for Life?¹⁹

Abby's sentiments when the facility she worked at closed: "It was over. No more children would die inside those walls. No more women would be deceived into believing that aborting their children would 'solve' their problems, nor would they be subjected to Planned Parenthood's agenda."²⁰ What had been a house of death would kill no more miniature human beings.

The Moral Case

The moral case for the killing of the unborn has evaporated due to current science and ultrasound technology. And so the absurd euphemisms such as "women's healthcare" hide the truth that this is deeply false. (Whatever Planned Parenthood is supposed to represent — it certainly does not represent parenthood.)

The stunning illogic of Roe v. Wade, the barbarism, the racism, the bullying seem to have brought on a mass psychosis. Is there any way under God's heaven that you can stand for or defend the taking of 60+ million lives? We have government sanctioned homicide and absolution for intentional killing. The greatest threat to Planned Parenthood is the truth. Please help us to tell it.

Every Democratic presidential candidate thus far strongly supports abortion up until birth — an act **unthinkable** only a short time ago. Radical bills are being proposed which would overturn all pro-life laws nationwide. More than fifty times in Congress efforts have been made to criminalize infanticide, but these bills have been rejected.

"Today's genocide is as illogical and evil as that of World War II. In fact, our current war on unborn children far surpasses the unbelievable loss inflicted by the Nazis. But this modern-day war on life comes not from a horrible Hitler-like dictator. Instead, the loss of life is inflicted by the most unlikely murderer imaginable — one's own mother.

"With the start of 2019, Americans have allowed 46 years of legalized abortion. How can this be? Why did people not speak out against the killing? There are lessons to be learned from history. Looking back to the Nazi Holocaust, we can see how Christians in one European church reacted to 'The Final Solution,' the trains that traveled by. Aboard these trains were

hundreds of desperate Jews, suffering and dying. As they passed the church, they would yell and cry out for help. The congregation would hear the click of the train coming down the track, knowing that soon, the urgent pleas for help would come."²¹

And so what did they do? They sang louder — as the church is "singing" today, i.e. doing other things so that they don't have to hear the cries of the unborn or get involved. How is it that Christians can ignore the holocaust of abortion? Can real Christians turn away when innocent blood is being shed? We have this clear biblical injunction: "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves; ensure justice for those who are perishing" (Prov. 31:8-9). The impetus for courage in this can come from living the biblical philosophy which is found here: "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil" (Isa. 5:20).

We are invited to become part of a living fence — a ring of life which will save the lives of those in danger of dismemberment or poisoning, and offer their mothers practical help, support, prayer and encouragement. ✧

Key Bible Verses

Word Biblical Commentary on the food laws:

"Mark...writing to Gentile Christians, maximizes the point and makes it quite explicit with the editorial comment 'Thus he declared all foods clean' (Mark 7:19)...Jesus' words open the door to a new evaluation of the dietary restrictions, i.e., to the commands of the written Torah itself. For Matthew, Jesus alone is the true interpreter and upholder of the ultimate meaning of the Torah. It should be no surprise that it took some time for the implicit teaching of Jesus to be fully understood and implemented in the early church, especially by Jewish Christians. Thus we see Peter struggling with the issue in Acts 10:10. Yet even Jewish Christians such as Peter (Acts 10:28) and Paul, himself a former Pharisee, learn eventually that the distinctions of ritual purity have been done away with in Christ (Rom. 14:14, 20)."²²

On Galatians 3:19: "Why, then, the Law? It was **added** because of transgressions, having been ordained by angels through the agency of a mediator, **until** the Seed for whom the promise was intended should come."

"The third point made in Paul's answer lays stress again on a time factor: 'until the Seed for whom the promise was intended should come.'... 'Until' sets the *terminus ad quem* [time up to which: final point] for the Law, just as 'was added' sets its *terminus a quo* [time from which: point of origin]. Thus the Mosaic law, for Paul, was intended by God to be in effect for God's people *only up until* the coming of Christ... 'Thus the [Abrahamic] covenant of promise is presented to the

¹⁹ whowillstand.net

²⁰ *Unplanned*, p. 274

²¹ lifesitenews.com, 1-2-19

²² *Word Biblical Commentary, Matthew 14-28*, p. 433.

mind as of permanent validity, both beginning before and continuing through the period of the law and afterwards; the law on the other hand as *temporary*, added to the permanent [Abrahamic] covenant, for a period limited in both directions.”²³

On Galatians 3:23: “Before this [Christian] faith came, we were kept in custody under the Law, being confined **until** this coming faith would be revealed.”

“By ‘the faith’ and the ‘coming faith to be revealed,’ Paul means not faith generically, but the particular faith referred to in v. 22b”: “the faith of Jesus Christ” (p. 145).

In **1 Corinthians 9:20**, Paul says, “To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win Jews; to those under the Law, like one under the Law, **though I myself am not under the Law.**” He tells us expressly his own relationship, as a Jew and Christian, to the Law of Moses. For diplomatic reasons, in order to gain a hearing and win converts, he is willing to go “under the Law” (*upo nomon*) in the company of non-Christian Jews, who were still under the Law of Moses. But Paul, by contrast, as a Jew and Christian, is himself “not under the Law” (*upo nomon*). Paul is careful to add that he is not lawless. He goes on to explain in verse 21 that he is under the “Law of Messiah,” which is deliberately contrasted with the Law of Moses. The Greek and the English versions of this passage are perfectly easy, and should not be interfered with. Paul is lucidly clear. ✧

Comments

“I have just finished reading Eric Chang’s book *The Only True God* [theonlytruegod.org; see book review in April issue]. It has been wonderful for me as it answers questions I have had on a number of topics, one being John 1:1. It has changed my view of Scripture and helped me to understand it in a new light. I am not one who remembers the exact place in Scripture a particular quote is, and I often forget what I have read some time ago. However I do remember the ideas and intentions as the Holy Spirit brings it to mind. Eric Chang brings out the essence of Scripture with things I had never thought of and in doing so, the book has been a blessing to me.”
— *Australia*

“I have recently been led by the Holy Spirit to the knowledge of the Father as the only True God. This knowledge to me only glorifies the Father and the Son in Truth and Righteousness, as revealed by the Holy Spirit through Scripture. I have watched with great interest many of your videos, including some in which you have debated the truth of the Father as the only true God and Jesus as His Son, born of a woman. In my understanding

Jeremiah 1:5 (“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you...”) is a biblical gem to support the ‘pre-existence’ of virtually all creation in the mind of God the Father — including the Son of God (the Preeminent, Firstborn of all creation) and all believers (Eph. 1:4).” — *email*

“As far as I know, there aren’t any biblical unitarian fellowships in Holland. So I would like to thank you for your website which gives me a lot of information which I believe is the true Gospel of the Kingdom of God.” — *Netherlands*

“Thank you for the recently mailed magazine. Grace and peace from the God, the Father of mercies, to you. May Lord’s abiding joy be your stay and anchor even these tough days — as we see the march and progression of God’s ordained order of the flow of history and time — according to His prophetic word and sovereign will and good pleasure which will surely reach a glorious conclusion — when all the earth will be covered with the Lord’s glory as waters cover the sea. May we all, by God’s merciful grace and love, be accounted worthy as part of the redeemed and triumphant saints to stand with Christ — ruling and reigning with Him as kings and priests to our God — in that glorious time of full manifestation of the Kingdom covering the whole territory of all nations of the earth.” — *Nigeria*

“Over the past few years I began the process of reevaluating my beliefs. I had spent most of my Christian life in independent Baptist circles. It seemed to start with questioning the idea of eternal conscious torment. That started the ball rolling at really looking at what the Scriptures actually say. So here I am now four years later and I have changed completely my view of the final state of the wicked, and the Trinity. Everyone I know as a Christian is a Trinitarian. Men I respect and who I feel are better men than I am, Christians for a long time. How can they have missed this? And yet I understand: when you grow up steeped in certain doctrines as part of the foundation of your faith, without even knowing it you have built your life on them and don’t even know why. I searched on youtube and eventually started watching debates — oneness vs. Trinitarian and then unitarian vs. Trinitarian. That exposed me to Anthony Buzzard, Carlos, Sean Finnegan, and a few others. As I went to the Scriptures it was just like everything started falling in place. All the passages just molded together and cohesively made sense. All the constant distinguishing between Jesus and God — it all made sense. And then the beauty of ‘What is man that You are mindful of him?’ It’s about *man!* Jesus is one of us, and, wow, what love God has toward man, and what exaltation for our great Lord and Savior. The more I read the more I became convinced.” — *Virginia*

²³ *Word Biblical Commentary, Galatians*, p. 139.