

Focus on the Kingdom

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Anthony Buzzard, editor

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28th Theological Conference

April 11-14, 2019

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Please arrange your arrival time on Thursday early enough to catch one of the two shuttle runs. On Sunday, May 6 we will provide **only 1** shuttle run. In order to allow you enough time to catch your return flight, we suggest you not book your return flight prior to 3:30 pm. The conference begins with registration at 4 pm on Thursday and ends with lunch on Sunday. Driving directions to Calvin Center are at calvincenter.org. The address is 13550 Woolsey Rd., Hampton, GA 30228.

Musing About *Echad* (One)

by John Lemley, Washington

The famous *Shema* (“Listen”) of Deuteronomy 6:4 reads: “Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God is one LORD.” Jesus quoted the *Shema* in Mark 12:29 in response to a fellow Jewish scribe’s question, “Which is the first commandment of all?” The scribe agreed heartily with Jesus’ answer, replying, “You have truly stated that He is one, and there is no one else besides Him” (12:32). Jesus obviously affirmed the unitary monotheistic definition of God, because he commended the scribe for his answer (v. 34).

Much has been written, as can be quickly seen by a search on the Internet, about the Hebrew word *echad* (one). Teachings arguing that *echad* and/or the noun it modifies/describes (LORD) can be “uni-plural” or “compound” or “complex” are common. I want now to investigate those claims in this article.

Echad is translated into English by the word “one” (over 900 times), “alone” (five times) and “only” (two times: 1 Kings 4:19: “the only officer” and Ezek. 7:5: “an only evil”). An English-speaking reader who is unfamiliar with Hebrew and uncertain about the arguments for the supposed “uni-plurality” or “complexity” of *echad* might be tempted to think that *echad* is a technical, perhaps esoteric, difficult theological term. It is absolutely no such thing!

There is no mystery about the word *echad*. It simply means what we mean by our English word “one.” “One” is the word every English-speaking child learns when learning to count. Children who are born into a Hebrew-speaking family learn the word “*echad*.” Children who are born into a Greek-speaking family learn the word “*heis*.” The word “*heis*” (one) occurs in Mark 12:29 quoted above. “One” in any language is a numerical adjective indicating a singular number of something. If the cardinal number “one” can be “uni-plural” or “complex,” then the entire reliability of mathematics is confused and destroyed.

Genesis 2:24 is claimed to be an example of the “uni-plural” nature of *echad*: “A man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one (*echad*) flesh.” In the first marriage, Adam and Eve became one flesh. In 4th grade grammar class I learned that “one” is an adjective because it answers the question “How many?” So Adam plus Eve equals one flesh.

For a modern example, my wife and I can be called “one flesh.” In today’s language we would say that we

are one couple. If another husband and wife joined us in a room there would be two couples, or two fleshs, in the room. My easy point is that the word “one” always and invariably refers to one of something. Whether it is one person consisting of trillions of cells or one universe consisting of trillions of stars, the subject, a person or a universe, is one singular unit. The noun which the adjective “one” modifies (describes) can have many parts. But the adjective “one” itself never becomes “uni-plural.” Any noun in the universe can be described by the word “one,” but it is entirely false to say that the word “one” means anything other than “one.”

In spite of the above, it seems that some people continue to assert that *echad* is a “uni-plural” word. I hope that this study has shown that the adjective “one” is never “uni-plural.” No recognized dictionary would offer you that definition. It always, without exception, means one of whatever noun is being modified (described). The modified noun can have many parts, such as one tripod, one cluster, one forest, one flock or one nation. But the quantity expressed by the adjective “one” is never plural. It always means “one” and not two or more.

So on to the corollary question: Let’s look at the noun LORD, which the adjective “one” modifies (describes) in Deuteronomy 6:4. If *echad* is never a “uni-plural” word, does the “uni-plural” idea apply to the nouns “the LORD” or “God” in some other way? Is “the LORD” or “God” a category consisting of two or three or more individuals? Is “the LORD God” a collective noun like cluster or something akin to a corporate entity?

When Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6:4-5 he confirmed his belief that God is one LORD. In case there is any confusion as to how many are included in the noun LORD, Jesus said in prayer to his Father, “This is eternal life [the life of the age to come], that they may know You, the only true God...” (John 17:3). Since Jesus said that the only true God is one LORD, I see no other option than to understand that Jesus believed the one God was one single Individual (his and our heavenly Father), certainly not a “uni-plural” being.

The “Our Faith” section of the church website www.saintstephensherman.org/about_us describes that church’s belief in God thus: “Think of it as three ‘whos’ in one ‘what.’ God is an unfathomable mystery indeed!” As far as I know, Hank Hanegraaff appears to be the first person to use the phrase “one *what* and three *who*’s,” cited in the book *The Forgotten Trinity* by James White (1998, p. 27).

Let’s investigate the formulation “three ‘whos’ in one ‘what,’” also sometimes referred to as “one what and three who’s.” By way of illustration, think of a board of directors. We could say it is “many ‘whos’ (members) in one ‘what’” (board) or “one ‘what’

(board) and many ‘whos’ (members).” The fact that a board has many members is evident from how we sometimes use plural pronouns when referring to a board. For example, “The board decided that they would meet next Tuesday.” While it should be “the board...it,” we know that the common switch to the plural pronoun is due to acknowledgment of a board being comprised of many people. Similarly, in Genesis 2:25 the two members of the “one flesh” are referred to as “they,” meaning the man and the woman. *They* will become one flesh.

In contrast, the Bible contains multiple hundreds of examples where God is referred to by singular pronouns: *I, Me, My, Mine, Myself, He, Him, His, Himself, You* (singular), *Your* (singular), *Yours* (singular), *Yourself* (singular). Even those who adhere to a view of a multiple-Person Godhead do *not* say “the LORD/God...*They* really love you” but rather “the LORD/God...*He* really loves you.” It is because their minds realize it is unthinkable to have a truly singular Deity and then use plural pronouns. It is thus unthinkable and unimaginable for them to do so when they speak of the one LORD God.

In other words, when we speak of God as our Father or Lord, we are confessing that God is a “who” (a Person), not a “what” (a thing). Surely, the Bible speaks of God as one personal being, never as an ideal or abstract entity or category.

“God” knows if He is a “what” and three “whos” or if He is an individual, a solitary, divine, unique, personal being. In every Scripture I can find where God speaks of His identity, God declares Himself to be “one ‘who,’” not “one ‘what.’” Indeed, the very fact that God *speaks* demonstrates God as one “who,” not one “what.”

Notice these three of multiple similar passages:

- Isaiah 45:5-6: “I am the LORD, and there is no other. Besides Me there is no God...There is no one beside Me. I am the LORD and there is no other.”
- Deuteronomy 32:39: “See now that I, I am He, and there is no God besides Me.”
- Exodus 20:3: “You are to have no other gods before Me.”

Without question, Jesus knows if God is a “what,” and if he, Jesus, is the second “who” in that “what.” Yet his statements refer to God solely and very clearly as one individual, his (and our) Father, a single “who.”

One more example, in addition to John 17:3 mentioned above, should suffice:

- John 20:17: “I ascend to my Father and your Father, and my God and your God.”

Jesus’ statement that the Father is the only one who is true God (John 17:3) completely excludes a “three ‘whos’ in one ‘what’” speculation. Jesus always spoke of and prayed to his Father as though He were one

separate, unique, individual entity or person. He never referred to God as a category or plural being in any sense whatever.

I know of no Scripture describing God as a group, such as a board or committee, or any other collective noun. On the contrary, Hebrews 1:3 says that Jesus is “the express image of his [God’s] person.” The passage does not say Jesus is a member of the God-group, but rather that God is a Person and Jesus (a separate individual from God) is God’s express image. The verse continues by saying that Jesus sat down at the right hand of God (cp. Ps. 110:1, where the second “Lord” should be “lord,” *adoni*, my lord, which never refers to Deity).

Moses and others wrote much about God. Their statements, like those of God and Jesus, refer to God always as a “who”:

- Deuteronomy 32:12: “The LORD alone guided him, and there was no foreign god with him.”
- David – Psalm 86:10: “You alone are God.”
- Hezekiah – 2 Kings 19:15: “You are God, You alone.”
- Nehemiah – Nehemiah 9:6: “You alone are the LORD.”
- Paul – I Corinthians 8:6: “To us there is one God, the Father...”

If God was a “what,” rather than a “who,” then I wonder why, when the opportunity was perfect for setting people straight, that opportunity was missed.

In John 10:33-38 his Jewish countrymen accuse Jesus of making himself God. Instead of agreeing, Jesus clarified by stating, “I said, ‘I am the Son of God.’”

In Acts 17:22-31 the Apostle Paul is talking with pagan Greeks who were accustomed to the idea of many gods. Verse 18 says, “He seems to be a proclaimer of strange gods’ — because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection.” What a perfect opportunity! One might be tempted to say, perhaps, that Paul never described Jesus as God to his Jewish countrymen because they were not ready to receive it — but these Greek philosophers, they were ready to hear about Paul’s strange gods. But we don’t see this happen. Rather, Paul spends the bulk of his sermon telling them who (not what) God is. Then, at the very end, he introduces Jesus as the one *man* through whom this one God has ordained to judge the world (v. 31).

As I think of all these things, I admit that claims that the clear unitarian words of the *Shema* contain proof for God consisting of “a plurality of beings” baffle me. When Trinitarians try to explain, I become increasingly puzzled and alarmed. So, without exception, they try to win me over to their position by saying something like: “The Trinity is a great mystery, beyond human comprehension and transcending human reason. It defies logical explanation, yet absolutely must be believed in order to be a Christian.” What this omits to say is that

God uses plain human language, grammar and logic to define who He is. God absolutely does not want to mystify or confuse us about His identity.

In my attempt to understand what people mean when they say that the number “one” can refer to a composite or integrated whole, thus allowing for the “uni-plural” nature of God, I hope I have described their teaching accurately. I likewise hope that I accurately described the corresponding idea that “the LORD” or “God” of the *Shema* might be a corporate entity. In order for honest dialogue to occur there must be an accurate understanding of views other than one’s own. From there honest, valuable and productive conversation can begin. I invite you to continue the conversation. What do you say?

We are dealing with the supremely great ideas of the universe. If life in the coming age is our desire, we should start with Jesus’ own definition of monotheism: “You, Father, are the only one who is true God” (John 17:1, 3). All other definitions are false, and truth is required for all of us to be saved (2 Thess. 2:10). ✧

“It Is Written”

by Barbara Buzzard

We have a wonderful carved wood version of these words on our mantelpiece. These words stimulate and challenge. They serve as our best defense, our lifeline, our best next step and our only authority. They provide that rock solid foundation which we all seek, the nonnegotiable that truly is. You cannot starve if you are feeding on these words but will grow in grace and knowledge. And not only that, they allow us to “number our days that we may present to You a heart of wisdom” (Ps. 90:12). Hazard a guess as to how many times these words appear in Scripture. “It is written” occurs 76 times, 60 in the New Testament and 16 in the Hebrew Bible. They might be important! Along these same lines are the phrases: “You err by not knowing the Scriptures,” and “Have you not read?” If we combine all three we have dozens of texts which we must pay the strictest attention to, because Jesus did.

These words were Jesus’ answer to temptation in the wilderness, and I’m certain, very many other times when he was under fire. It is very interesting to note that Jesus’ agonizing question on the cross, “My God, my God! Why have you forsaken me?” is a direct quotation of Psalm 22:1 which he obviously knew well. He must have reflected and meditated long and hard on this as we know he did on the other Scriptures. Theologically, we know that God did not forsake him, and yet he *felt* forsaken. After all, he was human.

How Do We Then Live?

These words, “It is written,” are the answer to Francis Schaeffer’s brilliant question, “How do we then live?” These are the *source* of our Christian energy. Especially when disaster strikes, or great tragedy, we live by feeding on the words of Scripture, and *not* by feelings. Feelings cannot be trusted and Scripture can, *always*. I go against popular psychology in saying that it doesn’t *matter* how you feel; it matters what is *true*. In our world of anti-intellectualism we suffer from “thinking with our feelings,” and the result is that we do not think well. (I don’t excuse myself.)

“Indeed, feelings are functional only when they are under intellectual control. When the opposite is the case, when feelings rule thought processes, irrational thinking and behavior are the inevitable outcome. Furthermore, when feelings rule, facts become irrelevant. Examples abound of widely held beliefs that have little if any basis in fact. To the ‘believers’ in question, that makes no difference. They *feel*, and that’s good enough for them.”¹

Quoting Scripture can kill temptation. Stop it dead. Destroy it. Addressing a temptation with the sword of the Scriptures can put out temptation much like quenching a raging fire. Scripture is our authority and not the temptation. *It is written*. But we have to be prepared. We have to know what is written. The Evil One would like to take us out. Preparation and determination can prevent that. This is the homework phase of “resisting the Devil” (James 4:7). And facts must rule.

Non Negotiables

One of our biggest problems is that we want to behave as though *it has not been written*. We want optional extras when there are none. We want an “It’s all good” freedom. We want to have *our own* truth. We want negotiables when there are none. We *pretend* in the controversy over same sex marriage that there is no mandate. Is Romans 1:26-27 ever quoted by the news media? There *is* a mandate — *it is written*. Our instructions and guidelines have been *written*. The fact of our not liking what is written does not give us license to erase it, or ignore it, or change it.

Feelings over fact is the end result, the outworking of a culture that is anti-intellectual, as ours has so sadly become. Former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher may have been on to something when she said: “People don’t think any more. They feel...One of the great problems of our age is that we are governed by people who care more about feelings than they do about thoughts or ideas.” Professor Stephen Prothero comments:

¹ John Rosemond, “Thoughts count, feelings don’t,” *Atlanta Journal Constitution*.

“Evangelicals show scant interest in learning what Scripture has to say or wrestling with what it might mean.” Wrestling sounds like hard work and would be completely unnecessary when we can just consult our feelings. What a quick fix that is, and how devastating for us and for our world.

Where did we go wrong? Jesus’ answer: “You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures nor the power of God” (Matt. 22:29). With age comes an increasing regard and respect for the Scriptures. Funny, that. It must be like the proverbial “too soon old, too late smart.” Or like the son who said that he never realized how smart his father was until he (the son) reached 30. One reason for this intensification of regard for the Scriptures is that they are *so* right on each occasion and with reference to *everyone*. They are so right about the nature of man and his proneness to doing wrong. They always get you. Spot on. They nail everyone. No one gets off scot-free. Man is true to form, deceitful in all his ways (Jer. 17:9). Also, as we “adult up,” more and more of what this world has to offer is exposed as a sham or a scam or just finally recognized as nothing but flimsy. Just don’t give me flimsy; I haven’t the time.

Clueless in the Universe

When we give vent to feelings and let them rule our thought processes we behave like teenagers, “clueless in the universe,” as described by Janie Cheaney in *World* magazine. Have we idolized adolescence to the point of denying that aptitude/intelligence/wisdom are required for genuine success? Have we suppressed our own judgment in favor of wrongheaded thinking? We all now know that research has shown that the brain is not even fully mature until around age 24. We know that good judgment comes with maturity and experience. This is not a comparison of virtues or worth. These are givens, as is the fact that teenagers are four times more likely to be involved in a crash than older drivers. One important factor here is that forty year olds can remember and understand what it is like to be twenty. The reverse is obviously impossible. We have done our youth no favors by idealizing them. We have done ourselves (and them) a great disservice in not going after wisdom and leading the way to this pearl of great price. Have we aided and abetted the clueless?!²

Loving the Truth

I was struck recently when reading an author’s foreword. He gave great thanks to a friend for teaching him to *love the truth*. It altered his life. It stopped me in my tracks. This is so all-important that it is not enough

² A disclaimer here: I have recently “fallen in love” with several teenagers who have displayed wonderful character traits. I am not anti-teenagers!

just to love the Truth oneself, but one must *teach* others to love it. Otherwise, we are losing ground, just paddling upstream. It reinforces the reality that in our day and age, this skill and virtue must be *taught*.³ We must speak of these things in season and out of season: “Teach them diligently to your sons and talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up” (Deut. 6:7). That would be the *application* of the faith of which we speak, putting one’s faith to work with the accompanying “I’ve got your back” approach so necessary to living a Christian life. A hunger for Truth honors God in the noblest possible way since He is the Author of Truth.

Psalm 119:29 is so very interesting with a view to the incredible importance of knowing Scripture. My New Living Translation actually has “Keep me from lying to myself.” And Proverbs 14:8 speaks of fools deceiving *themselves*. Feelings can be false whereas facts cannot. Feelings, rather like a false friend, can betray us. So by knowing Scripture we can not only prevent sin against God but against our own selves as well. Psalm 119:11: “I have hidden Your word in my heart, that I might not sin against You.”

Emotions can be debilitating and even paralyzing if we give them power. Scripture, on the other hand, is emboldening and energizing, to say nothing of life altering. Consider these guarantees we have been given: The Promises, The Blessed Hope, Unfailing love, Forgiveness. If you were to sketch out more thoroughly what is promised, the future is more than we could ever have imagined (and it’s not heaven!). History is a prologue to the future. And we can, if wise, avail ourselves of an unbounded wisdom because *it is written*.

Romans 3:4: “Though everyone else in the world is a liar, God is true. As the Scriptures say, ‘He will be proved right in what He says, and He will win His case in court.’”

Matthew 4:4: “It is written, ‘People need more than bread for their life; they must feed on every word of God.’”

It is necessary; it is urgent; it is of the highest priority that we do as the people did in Luke’s narration of Jesus: “All the people were hanging on every word he said” (Luke 19:48). I am hanging! Hang with me, please! ✧

³ I have heard that Jewish people when reading the Torah will give their little children honey so that they associate that sweetness with the Scriptures.

The Creator and the Cosmos by Hugh Ross

A Book Review by Terry Anderson, Minnesota

Faith that God exists is quite adequate for most devoted Christians. But for many who define themselves as atheist or agnostic, faith plays no part in their worldview, or for that matter their views of the cosmos and how it all began. They want PROOF! They want incontrovertible proof that God created the universe and in so doing created the earth and mankind.

Scientists, including anthropologists, paleontologists, physicists, and astrophysicists, live in a world of data and assumptions that what they measure and see can be translated into solid, believable conclusions. Interpretations of the data and visible inputs can, depending on one’s preconceived beliefs, lead to different conclusions.

What if the circumstances under which the universe was originated point to a Creator, not because it makes sense theologically (which it does for Christians), but because the data cannot be refuted and all mathematical measurements and physics equations point to intelligent design? This design has been fine-tuned to a degree that even the most hardened atheists find difficult to refute.

So much information on the universe has flooded into the halls of science in the last 20-30 years to enable astrophysicists to confirm that the universe has been created to sustain life on planet earth, and that galaxies, along with concepts like black holes and dark energy, support this concept to an unimaginable degree of certainty — up to 10^{50} or more. That’s 10 with 50 zeros behind it.

Hugh Ross, pastor and astronomer, has given atheists and agnostics something to really think about in terms of a challenge to religiously held dogmas in the scientific community. If it can be proven that a personal God actually did create the universe, then what does that do to other cherished beliefs of the “there is no god” crowd, especially evolution?

Ross hammers away with mathematics and physics and logic that are challenging to refute. He gets a bit beyond the lay person in some of his discussions but always brings you back to analogies that can be grasped by the average person. Not that it doesn’t help to have studied some of these sciences or read books on quantum physics; it does. But it is not necessary to understand his arguments.

Does this mean that he has won over the Stephen Hawkings and Richard Dawkins of the science world? No, but he certainly has made a dent in the shell that surrounds most atheists and agnostic scientists.

Let it suffice that he has made an incredible contribution to both science and theology in positing that they can live together and come to mutual

conclusions. It is interesting that Ross, in searching and studying world religions, believes that the God of the Bible, old and new covenants, is the Creator, and no other religion offers even a close rationale for how we arrived on planet earth at the time and place we did and how it all continues to be balanced and maintained (fine-tuned) for the benefit of humanity.

Unfortunately, he is a Trinitarian. I often wonder about individuals who make a significant contribution to knowledge of and belief in God but can't quite make the leap to the singularity of the one and only God (John 17:3; 5:44). On the one hand he has opened up a spectacular window to this God who so marvelously designed the universe, but on the other hand, he can deny the most simple and basic instruction and command in the Shema. But God has his generous invitation: He desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:4-5). Let us accept the gift that Mr. Ross has given and fully grasp the heavens that reveal the glory of God.

Whatever you may have heard about the "Big Bang Theory" of how the universe came into existence, put it on hold until you read the book. Ross has a way of blending Genesis and the Big Bang to harmonize our understanding. They may not be mutually exclusive. What astronomers have observed and measured in the last 100 years has to somehow dovetail into the first chapter of Genesis. Whatever they have observed does not, as far as I can determine, interfere with what God has accomplished in the process of creation. If astronomers observe light and objects moving constantly outward from a central point over time then can we really challenge that? And if we do, on what basis? There is no contradicting Scripture, that I know of, that would substantiate that claim.

There are 3 basic theories for the origin of the universe: the Big Bang, Steady State and Oscillating. Only the first one is compatible with a creation model. The other 2 are attempts by atheists to explain this wonderfully complex and balanced universe without a Creator.

I'm going to quote some of Ross's most mind-bending statements and then let you get the book for some electrifying reading. In chapter 5, Ross introduces us to "dark energy," an unknown force that supposedly explains the constant expansion of the universe, an opposing force to gravity. This force, in order to maintain order in the universe, must be fine-tuned to such a degree that we humans find difficult to comprehend.

Here is what Ross says about fine-tuning on page 54. "A fine-tuning measure of one part in 10^{122} ranks as the most spectacular fine-tuning measurement so far achieved by scientists. This fine-tuning is 10^{43} times more exquisite than someone blindfolded, with just one

try, randomly picking out a single marked proton from all the protons existing within the entire extent of the observable universe! Or if one were to compare the fine-tuning design of dark energy to make advanced life possible with the best example of fine-tuning design achieved by humans, the design of dark energy would rank about 10^{99} times superior, that is a factor of one thousand trillion trillion trillion trillion trillion trillion trillion trillion trillion times. What does this superior fine-tuning design say about the One who created the universe? It implies that at a minimum this One is 10^{99} (99 zeros) more intelligent and more knowledgeable than the most brilliant scientists and engineers and...this cosmic Creator must be a personal being."

Could dark energy be Holy Spirit — God's power and outreach going throughout the universe to maintain order and stability? It could be the reason that scientists sense the need for it, but can't quite define it.

In chapter 17 ("Earth: The Place for Life"), Ross eloquently describes how essential for life it is that the MWG (Milky Way Galaxy) is situated in the universe and the planets situated in the universe just right to make life possible and sustainable. On page 221 he states that "it seems apparent that personal intervention on the part of the Creator takes place not just at the origin of the universe but throughout the history of the universe and the solar system. In other words...the remoteness of the probability of finding a planet fit for life suggests that the Creator personally and specifically designed and constructed our galaxy cluster, our galaxy, our Sun, each of the Sun's planets and belts of asteroids and comets, Earth's collider, the Moon and Earth for life."

Ross has made a solid case for the Creator God of the Bible. The God who revealed Himself to Job did so by citing many of His accomplishments in creation. Job finally came to truly understand how great God was, and he repented in dust and ashes of his former blind failure.

We, above all generations, can behold God's glory in the heavens with instruments unimaginable to generations past. If you choose to buy Ross's book I hope you make it a point to "hang in there" through the very scientific parts. It can only increase your faith in the power and majesty of the only true God, the Father.

If there is a better Scripture than Romans 1:18-20 to describe this generation then I don't know it. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men who by their wickedness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world His invisible nature, namely, His eternal power and Deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse." ✧

Is the God of the Bible the Father Alone?

The recent debate between Dr. Dale Tuggy and Dr. Michael Brown stimulated interest in the greatest of all questions about defining God, the One God of the universe. These questions are far from being merely intellectual puzzles. Knowing who the one true God is, and who Jesus is, are the fundamental concerns of all of us, and must be. The debate in North Carolina brought devoted Bible students together, including leaders of the Iglesia ni Cristo based in the Philippines, whose framework belief system is close to ours. To the alarm of many, Dr. Brown stated that “the Son never died” in direct contradiction to Romans 5:10! In his extensive writings Dr. Brown is unclear about the *meaning* of the word “one.” “One” in fact in Hebrew functions exactly like the word “one” in English. Your child of 2 has no difficulty with either the word “one” or the word “only.” “Only,” we all recognize, excludes anyone else. It is a sad commentary on the confusion that has been made of Scripture when public debates have to be held to struggle over the meaning of “one.” “One,” any dictionary will tell you, means one and not two or more. God’s characteristic as the unique, one and only Creator is the stupendous truth which you and your family must cherish and teach to anybody willing to listen. Just read Mark 12:29 and John 17:3 and note this: It was the philosophically-minded theologian Augustine of Hippo who, faced with John 17:3, could only tolerate it by *altering* the words prayed by Jesus, and thus destroying the proposition given us by Jesus. Augustine said, in an arbitrary and dictatorial manner, “This is eternal life: that they may know You *and Jesus Christ*, whom You have sent, as the only true God.” But does the churchgoing public know this or even care?

Please visit kogmissions.com to watch the debate.

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translated into Russian and printed every month. We are, in God’s grace, a “clearing house” for truth seekers and finders all over the world. Please see restorationfellowship.org

Comments

• “I cannot thank you enough for the *Focus on the Kingdom*. The articles are very well written and make a lot of sense to me. I love the comments of the ex Jehovah’s Witnesses and soon-to-be ex-JW’s. Let us pray that more see the True Light.” — *England*

• “I have learned much from your Kindle books. I have been seeking the truth about the Bible’s message for many years. I agree with you that the Kingdom with Messiah reigning is the only logical hope for humanity. All other religions, including Evangelical Christianity, teach a disembodied soul concept for ‘when we die.’ This concept is completely unnatural and most people cannot find hope in the idea. The statement ‘We teach Christ and Him crucified’ has been repeated hundreds of times in my course of study. I always think: and then what? Whatever happened to Jesus’ central message of the Kingdom of God?” — *Email*

• “This newsletter is a good means of study for me, and I just wanted to let you know I back it up in prayer and a gift now and then when I can, from my heart.” — *Indiana*

• “I’m a pastor of a small Christian assembly. Way back in the 80s I pastored a Reformed Baptist church that adopted the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith, and I was at that time a staunch defender of Trinitarianism and its creeds. It was only about three years ago that I began to see, by God’s grace, how the traditional, *man-formulated*, Trinitarian creeds conflict with the direct, *divinely-inspired* statements that are found in the Sacred Scriptures. For instance, Christ, in his prayer to the Father said in John 17: ‘And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee [**not us** nor you and I and the holy spirit] the only true God’ (vs. 3), which shows that Christ knows and acknowledges no other God but the Father alone to Whom he was praying at that solemn moment. Thank you so much for your ministry of sharing the knowledge that God has gifted you which will, under God, help many be freed from the chains of human tradition to know the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” — *Philippines*

• “I really enjoyed the message of the Kingdom livestreamed from Georgia this Sunday. It is so refreshing to hear the Lord’s own words put in his own context, basically that his brethren are the doers of the will and word of God through Christ alone, and we need to get ready for his appearing. I appreciate it especially, because I am one of those ‘scattered brethren’ with little fellowship in Christ with brethren.” — *Oregon*

Focus on the Kingdom
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Focus on the Kingdom
February, 2019

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