

# Focus on the Kingdom

Vol. 22 No. 12

Anthony Buzzard, editor

September, 2020

## The Precious Word *adoni*: “my lord”

There is no need at all for the alarming confusion and disagreement about who and how many the one true God is! Keep in mind that millions of Jews and millions of Muslims are kept at arm's length from Christ and true Christianity, because of what seems to those masses of people a strange and alien doctrine of the Trinity. Jews in their history were willing if necessary to die for the conviction that God was one single Divine Person. This was no “academic” wrangle over words, but a non-negotiable issue about true religion versus idolatry.

This issue is huge for Christians claiming to follow Jesus, since Jesus repeated the Shema, “Hear, O Israel” (Mark 12:28-34, citing Deut. 6:4; 4:35) as “the greatest of all the commandments.” Mark 12:28-34 has brilliantly recorded for us all the vastly important definition of the one true God. Jesus is seen in that passage as fully agreeing with a friendly (on this occasion) Jewish Bible expert, or scribe.

The conversation Jesus had here is closely related to the follow-up question Jesus himself asked of his fellow Jews. Psalm 110:1 was the subject of Jesus’ question to them. Jesus, brilliant teacher as he was, asked them about the word “lord” in Psalm 110:1: “The LORD gave an oracle to my lord” (Ps. 110:1 quoted by Jesus in Mark 12:35-37).

This was Jesus’ final, last question! This astonishingly important conversation and teaching session occurred on the Tuesday or Wednesday of the final week of Jesus’ days before he was crucified on the Friday.

I repeat the question as Jesus posed it to his audience in the temple: “How is it that the scribes say that the Messiah is the Son of David? David himself said under the inspiration of holy spirit, ‘The LORD said to my lord, Sit at My right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.’”

You and your children need to be able to follow and teach others Jesus’ lesson here, arising from what Jesus had earlier called the “greatest of all the commandments” (Mark 12:29). If God was the one Lord GOD, who then was this *other lord* of Psalm 110:1?

I remind our readers that “if you love me [Jesus] you will obey my commandments” (John 14:15). A proper understanding of the teaching of Jesus is the hallmark of true Christianity (1 Tim. 6:3; 2 John 7-9). We must agree with Jesus about who God is and who the lord Jesus is.

We all need to be certain we have learned what Jesus taught in this closing lesson of his teaching career. First, God is one Person: “the Lord our God is one Person.” The word “one” here is the simple cardinal number one. “One” (*echad* in Hebrew, *eis* in Greek) is the first number when we count: “one, two, three.” Jesus’ language here is exactly the same as the parallel: “Abraham was one person” (Isa. 51:2; Ezek. 33:24). God is one Divine Person just as Abraham was only one human person.

It is a very simple and easy concept, well understood by your young children. Jesus, our rabbi, is here on record as affirming and repeating the great “Hear, O Israel” (the Shema) of Deuteronomy 6:4. Jesus was very obviously an orthodox Jewish person in his definition of God, agreeing perfectly with the great unitarian creed of Israel. If you are claiming to be a Christian then this must also be your creed. You must sound like Jesus!

Psalm 110:1 speaks of *two* persons who are “Lord” — or rather, to be more accurate, *one* Person who is the LORD GOD *addressing another person* who is **not** the Lord God, but the lord (no capital letter) **Messiah**.

All this is very straightforward and easy. The great “Hear, O Israel,” the Shema of Deuteronomy 6:4, defines GOD as one single Person. It should be immediately clear then that the second lord of Psalm 110:1 cannot also be GOD! If the second lord of Psalm 110:1 was GOD, that would add up to two Gods, an idea strictly forbidden by the Bible.

One of the most important facts you need as a student of the Bible is to know that that the Hebrew word for that second lord in Psalm 110:1 is *adoni*, pronounced “adonee.” We need to examine this word in its Old Testament occurrences. This is in no way some difficult, academic issue for “scholars” only! Jesus used that Psalm 110:1 as a key teaching for all who claim to be following Jesus, that is, claiming to be his disciples or students.

In the Hebrew Bible, what we call our Old Testament (about 75% of our Bible), the first Lord of Psalm 110:1 is YHVH, the word which gives us our English equivalent Yehovah. This is the personal name of the One God of the Bible and of the universe. The second lord is *adoni*, “my lord.” In Hebrew it looks like this: אֲדֹנָי

Hebrew is read from right to left. This word is pronounced “adonee.” It means “my lord.” Adoni appears 195 times in the Old Testament, and it is always a title for someone who is not GOD, but rather a human or sometimes an angelic superior. This is the word for “my lord” in the key Psalm 110:1, which Jesus used to instruct and silence all his opponents. It is the word which defines

who Jesus is as the Messiah, the Christ. He is a non-Deity lord. He is certainly not a “mere man” (whatever that is supposed to mean!), but a unique human person, who began to exist by miracle in the womb of his mother Mary. That is, Jesus had no human father. Jesus is unique. His father was GOD, who initiated the Messiah’s existence in the womb of Mary (Luke 1:35).

That same Jesus, as we know, ministered for some three years, and was then crucified by very deceived and hateful religious authorities. But the stupendous news is that God raised the dead Jesus back from the sleep of death (Ps. 13:3; Dan. 12:2) and, as the Apostles joyfully said, “We ate meals with him after he rose from the dead” (Acts 10:41). This is the greatest of Good News for us humans.

That Jesus, the one and only *Messiah* Jesus, the descendant of David, is the second lord, *adoni*, my lord, of Psalm 110:1.

To confirm and instill our lesson, let us look at a few samples of that same word, *adoni*, my lord, in the Old Testament. In Genesis 18:12 this marvelous word *adoni* is used by Sarah to describe her husband Abraham. Sarah was shocked at the idea that in her older age she was going to have a child. We read, “And so Sarah laughed to herself, thinking, ‘Now that I’ve become old, will I enjoy myself again? What’s more, my husband [*adoni*] is old!’” (Gen. 18:12, GWN).

Everyone will see that “my lord” is not a reference to God, but in this case to Abraham, the husband of Sarah. In Genesis 24:14, we read of “my lord [Abraham].” In Genesis 24:36 reference is made again to “the wife of my lord [Abraham].” In Genesis 24:48 we read “my lord [*adoni*] Abraham,” and in Genesis 32:4, 5, 18, “my lord [*adoni*] Esau.”

Next in 1 Samuel 24:6 we find that King Saul is described by David as “my lord, the LORD’s Messiah [anointed one].” “My lord” appears here as the proper title for the King of Israel, in this case, Saul. Saul is called the “anointed one of the LORD GOD.” Jesus of course in the New Testament is the ultimate anointed one of God. He is the Messiah of God (Luke 2:26). Elizabeth was exhilarated to greet Mary, “the mother of my lord” — certainly not “the mother of my God”! (Luke 1:43).

The great point to be observed is that “my lord” is a title for the royal Messiah, God’s anointed. And this title is properly given to the lord Messiah Jesus in Psalm 110:1.

In 1 Samuel 25:26 the celebrated Abigail, married to the fool Nabal, says to David, “Now my lord (*adoni*), as surely as the LORD [YHVH] lives and as you yourself live, it is the LORD [YHVH] who kept you from participating in bloodshed and avenging yourself by your

own hand. May your enemies and those who want trouble for my lord [David, *adoni*] be like Nabal.”

Then in 1 Samuel 25:27, Abigail said to David, “Accept this gift your servant [Abigail] has brought to my lord [David], and let it be given to the young men who follow my lord [David].”

The history of this marvelous title of respect (*adoni*), shows that it is never a title for the one GOD, but for a superior human ruler. This will ensure that we do not promote Jesus to a position he never ever claimed for himself!

Jesus was Jewish, the finest of all the Jewish people, the Son of God, who recited the Shema (“Hear, O Israel”) as the equivalent of his “pledge of allegiance” to the One God of the universe. In his teaching on Psalm 110:1 Jesus affirmed that he was not God, *not* the Lord God, but rather the “lord Messiah,” the supremely elevated and unique human being, the second Adam. Where Adam failed, Jesus succeeded perfectly, as the model of what we as human beings should be.

In the New Testament Jesus died, and God cannot die (1 Tim. 6:16). Jesus was fathered in the womb of his mother Mary (“begotten in her,” as the Greek reads, Matt 1:20). God cannot possibly be born. He has always existed and is without beginning and without end!

A theologian from Bern in Switzerland made our point for us, urging us to follow the words and theology of Jesus, our rabbi and savior:

“The Church found itself in a dilemma as soon as it tried to harmonize the doctrine of the Deity of Jesus and the Deity of the Father with monotheism. For according to the New Testament witnesses, in the teaching of Jesus, relative to the monotheism of the Old Testament and Judaism, there had been no element of change whatsoever. Mark 12:29ff. recorded the confirmation by Jesus himself, without any reservation, of the supreme monotheistic confession of faith of Israelite religion in its complete form... The means by which the Church tried to demonstrate the agreement of its [Trinitarian] dogma of the Deity of both Father and Son with monotheism, remained [and remains] seriously uncertain and contradictory.”<sup>1</sup>

This is a brilliant statement. It simply states the obvious, that Jesus fully endorsed the greatest of all commandments, the commandment defining the true God as “the only one who is true God” (John 17:3). Jesus echoed that same colossal truth as found in the Shema, Deuteronomy 6:4 and 4:35, in his high priestly prayer in John 17:3. Jesus there addressed God as the Father and said, “You, Father, are the only one who is true (genuine) God.” Jesus wanted us all to know that “one true God” and to know also the Messianic Son of God, Jesus himself.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Martin Werner, *Formation of Christian Dogma*, 1957, p. 241.

Readers should be aware that the very philosophically minded, later, so-called “church father” Augustine could not deal with John 17:3! Augustine was a Trinitarian, believing that the true God consisted of “three Persons in one God.” Jesus of course was not a Trinitarian. So what did Augustine do? He encountered the words of Jesus in John 17:3 teaching that the true and only God is a single divine Person, the Father. Instead of letting Scripture and the words of Jesus correct him, he simply forced his own church tradition on the Scripture of John 17:3. Augustine then said boldly: “The proper order of the words is, ‘That they may know You **and** Jesus Christ, whom You have sent, as the only true God.’”<sup>2</sup>

I trust that our readers will be suitably shocked and appalled at this “butchering” of the words of Jesus! It amounts to a forgery of the precious text of Scripture and the words of Jesus.

Augustine had not heeded the stern warning found in 1 Timothy 6:3 and 2 John 7-9, where both Paul and John issued the strongest possible alarm and alert, that any Bible teacher who does not affirm and teach “the teachings of Jesus” is to be rejected as a dangerous threat!

Alas, many churchgoers seem to have been tranquilized into an uncritical acceptance of whatever they hear in “church.” “Group-think” has taken over on a colossal scale.

Our studies in the precious final words of Jesus, quoting Psalm 110:1 will continue, as we work through many of the 195 appearances of the word *adoni*, my lord, a title never applied in the Bible to God, but only to a non-Deity superior like a husband or king.

If the task of persuading others to follow Jesus and the Shema seems daunting, take heart. Scholars of the highest rank are on your side. Bishop Tom Wright is world famous as a Bible instructor. He says:

“The answer Jesus gave [in Mark 12:29] was thoroughly non-controversial, quoting the most famous of Jewish prayers (‘Hear, O Israel, YHWH our God, YHWH is one’). The *Shema*, the prayer which begins with these lines, was **as central to Judaism then as it is now...[Jesus] was a first-century Jewish monotheist.**”<sup>3</sup>

“We are not to suppose that the Apostles identified Christ with Jehovah; there were passages which made this impossible, for instance **Ps. 110:1**, Mal. 3:1...‘It would be rash...to conclude that [Peter] meant to identify Jehovah with Christ. No such identification can be clearly made out in the NT.’”<sup>4</sup> ✧

## **Red Pill Gospel<sup>5</sup>** **Christianity, before it was ruined by Christians**, by Forrest Maready

**Book Review by Barbara Buzzard**

I will say at the outset that this is a remarkable book. The author admits it is dangerous in that it might make one uncomfortable and that it might actually force one to examine his faith as never before. (But I promise you that it is worth it.) The author details a fascinating journey from being a struggling atheist to struggling with Christianity’s inconsistencies and contradictions. Mr. Maready saw Christian doctrine as “pitting the nature of God against not only his children, but himself,” i.e. “the things he was supposed to have caused, or allowed to happen to his children, seemed infinitely worse than anything I would ever wish on mine.”<sup>6</sup> I so hope some readers can identify with this; it was a thought I too tried to stifle.

We are asked to consider what we now know about the massive corruption and deceit in government, pharmaceuticals, and news outlets and then to consider whether similar deceptions have taken place in Christianity. “Is it possible that you and I have been deceived into believing an interpretation of the Bible which has benefitted those in power and has rendered the original ‘good news’ of the Gospels as something much different? Something which causes uncertainty and anxiety, rather than joy and contentment?”<sup>7</sup>

Maready says, “It is the purpose of this book to explore this possibility. It is my belief that we as Christians have indeed been manipulated — the truth revealed throughout the Bible purposefully hidden from us in an attempt that others might have leverage, power, or control. I don’t believe this to be a cabal, mind you, a secret sect of an evil race that has conspired together against Christians for hundreds of years, but the natural, organic result of human sin, probing and exploiting weakness wherever it occurs.”<sup>8</sup>

And so the willing and the brave will soldier on, much to their advantage. If you hold a position contrary to that of the author, you can only be strengthened if you are correct, but if you could possibly have swallowed that blue pill and been deceived — you have much to gain. Proceed with caution — but do proceed. These matters are too important to let others determine them for you.

“It is my position that the faith we call Christianity is nearly unrecognizable from what the earliest followers of

<sup>2</sup> *Tractates (Lectures) on the Gospel of John*, tractate 105.

<sup>3</sup> *Jesus and the Victory of God*, p. 305, 652.

<sup>4</sup> Charles Bigg, DD, Regius Prof. of Ecclesiastical History, University of Oxford, in *International Critical Commentary, Peter and Jude*, 1910, pp. 99 and p. 127, quoting Hort.

<sup>5</sup> This book takes its name from the movie *The Matrix*, where the main character is offered two choices: taking the blue pill and continuing to live in a beautiful but fictitious prison world, or the red pill which will reveal the truth to him.

<sup>6</sup> Forrest Maready, *Red Pill Gospel*, p. 10.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14

Jesus believed — completely different in many ways — and if you are willing to explore, I want to show you.”<sup>9</sup>

### Surprising Controversy

Mr. Maready bravely tackles first the doctrine of the Trinity, educating his readers as to its violent past, the many people put to death for questioning it. “One of the reasons the Trinity was so controversial is because the concept of God as three specific Persons was a new idea. It wasn’t mentioned in the Old Testament and really didn’t get much attention until hundreds of years after Jesus was crucified.”<sup>10</sup>

In fact, in a recent interview Richard Rubenstein, author of *When Jesus Became God*, was asked, “When did Jesus become God?” He replied, “381 A.D.”<sup>11</sup> Truth is a remarkable thing, is it not?

Maready takes us through the monotheistic theme of the Scriptures and says that it is impossible to miss. However this biblical monotheism has been distorted, explained away, nullified, and basically sabotaged.

“Suffice it to say, throughout the Old Testament emphasis was placed on God being *one*. It was the most important, the most central, the defining belief that God insisted on above all other things...Ask yourself a question: Was Jesus a Trinitarian?...He was so careful in other areas — he instructed many of those he had healed not to talk about their recovery. In secret, he spoke of his impending death with his disciples. How then might he have made known this revelation of dynamite — one that would be so controversial it would kill so many people hundreds of years later?”<sup>12</sup>

### A Life of their Own

“Unfortunately, doctrines carry a lot of risk. They tend to take on a life of their own as time passes and others come along and add to them. People begin to believe doctrines over that which originally gave them meaning. Inevitably, systems form in which those who profess belief in certain doctrines may be rewarded with status. Those who refuse them might be penalized or, as we have seen, even killed. With enough time and the weight of consensus behind them, many doctrines become dogma — accepted blindly as indisputable truth beyond any shadow of doubt...My concern — indeed, the reason I have written this book — is that doctrine has taken over Christianity. It has supplanted the revelation of God, told plainly throughout history, and replaced it with a sequence of man-made beliefs that bear no resemblance to what God initially revealed. It has exchanged the obvious gospel for a convoluted mystery that only a few gifted men might fully comprehend. My desire is to pull

back the gossamer edifice man has created around it, and allow the raw, tender message of the Bible to shine forth.”<sup>13</sup>

Mr. Maready makes the important point that even at the end of his ministry, Jesus reveals nothing about any Trinity. Rather, he speaks about going to *his* God and *our* God. Clearly, with the rational mind that God has given us, we can see that anyone who *has* a God is *not* God.

Likewise, the late Dr. Colin Brown from Fuller Seminary said, “Indeed to be a Son of God one has to be a being who is not God.”<sup>14</sup>

### Danger Where We Thought There Was Safety — Gatekeepers

Maready’s discussion of this phenomenon is extremely interesting: “One of the most common signs of Christian pride is what I call the gatekeeper mentality. It is the notion that a certain person or group of people controls access to a special revelation or understanding of God. Very few others are capable of this comprehension — only the gatekeepers. Their hearts swell with pride with the confidence that God has gifted them with something others did not receive...Being a *gatekeeper or one of the chosen ones* short-circuits the negativity we’ve come to associate with pride and tells us — even if only subconsciously — ‘it’s okay this time. God wants this for you.’”<sup>15</sup> *The truth is* that the death of Jesus did away with all of the gatekeepers and chosen ones — to God’s delight (Isa. 1:11-13). The truth is that the church put the laity “under guardians,” and those guardians have not always been upright, God loving believers.<sup>16</sup>

This is a powerful explanation and summing up of Christian history: “Throughout the centuries that followed the death and resurrection of Jesus, man-made doctrines began to replace the Bible’s good news. Just as weeds will overtake the most beautiful mansion if it is not cared for, the gospel message began to be overcome by the gatekeepers and status seekers which inevitably sprouted around it, clawing their way inside with conjured doctrines wildly divorced from scriptural intent.”<sup>17</sup>

Maready asks us to reflect on the chasm that now is between the glad tidings that had the hearers singing and shouting ‘Hosanna in the highest!’ (when Jesus declared himself the Messiah) and the current thinking of ‘heaven is my home’ and a kind of get-me-out-of-here mentality. “Like the Trinitarian concept of God, it was borrowed from neighboring cultures and their pagan philosophies. It was a promise, of sorts — one that had worked like magic elsewhere. It was quite literally, hell.”

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 15

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 19

<sup>11</sup> Richard Rubenstein interview with Carlos Xavier, July 14, 2020, youtube.com/restorationfellowship

<sup>12</sup> *Red Pill Gospel*, p. 21

<sup>13</sup> *Red Pill Gospel*, pp. 25, 26

<sup>14</sup> *Ex Audit*, 1991, no. 7

<sup>15</sup> *Red Pill Gospel*, p. 35

<sup>16</sup> Harnack, *History of Dogma*, Vol. 3, p. 10.

<sup>17</sup> *Red Pill Gospel*, p. 58

## Hell

The “Christian” hell of eternal suffering is the next concept which Maready chooses to examine, not he says as a rogue discovery of his but with both Old and New Testament Scriptures to rethink. Maready leaves us with this vexing question: “Where did this concept come from, if not from the Bible? How did the temporary, corrective punishments of the Old Testament become the never-ending agony of the modern church’s hell?”<sup>18</sup>

Surely the church couldn’t have used the concept of never-ending torture to its advantage, to control and to terrify — or could it?<sup>19</sup> And this is where hell was truly weaponized: “As the pagan belief in an eternal hell of suffering began to creep into the church, baptism began to take on a very different tone...The church would take this beautiful observance and distort it into a superstitious sacrament, conducted out of fear rather than joy...Infinite hell had proven to be a greater evangelizer than the church could ever have imagined.”<sup>20</sup> And we can only imagine what this terror would have done to parents, therefore directly leading to infant baptism. The fact that critics of infant baptism were tortured and executed is hard to get our minds around, but that was the church’s attempt to silence dissent (gatekeepers at work).

## Hellish

Maready gives us a valuable clue to John Calvin by stating this: “Much of Calvin’s initial direction could be traced to him *having lost faith in the kingdom promise*. Like many others, he had come to believe that the prophesies about restoration and the future reign of the Messiah were not literal but had, in fact, already begun.”<sup>21</sup> This toxic thinking eventually led to his belief that with enough force and fear he might enforce godliness. “As a result, absolute moral control was enacted by Calvin. Officials made regular house calls, quizzing the occupants not only about their commitment to the great Reformer’s doctrines but minute details such as the specific quantity of certain colored clothing or the number of dishes they were using during mealtimes. One poor woman faced jail simply for ‘arranging her hair to an immoral height.’”<sup>22</sup>

But it gets worse, much worse. And the fact is that Calvin’s beliefs are so horrifying that most people do not know about them.<sup>23</sup> Maready says that they distort the nature of God and Jesus so badly that we could not even recognize them from Scripture. “As we will soon see,

Calvin — at his core — represents the most twisted portrayal of Christianity you are ever likely to see. I can think of no one who could top him. What he clearly laid out in his voluminous writings — the components of what he felt were crucial to the understanding of God, the Bible, and Christianity — represents a horrific depiction even most Calvinists are unable to contemplate.”<sup>24</sup>

Maready makes an astute point when he points out that Calvin’s logic is so inverted that it frustrates the rational mind. For example, God has called on all people everywhere to repent, and yet Calvin’s God would say that we are in our depravity incapable of doing just that. This depravity is so basic to Calvinism (Reformed is a code word for Calvinism) that even though Scripture speaks of “if” in a conditional way hundreds of times, they say we could never respond by our free will.

“Why would God have spent so much of the Bible clearly expressing what he desired of us if we were not at least capable of doing it? Again, the God that Calvinism paints feels like a disturbed deity, tormented by indecision and illogical thinking. What kind of God would strive so hard to instruct his children in hopes they would listen to him if he knew all along they would always despise him and were incapable of loving him?”<sup>25</sup>

And consider this: if all of Calvin’s dreadful theories were true, it would make God responsible for our salvation and not ourselves. Surely then in the parable of the talents the Master should congratulate himself rather than saying, “Well done, good and faithful servant!” (Matt. 25:21).

Why is a denunciation of Calvin’s theology so important? Because we often come in contact with those who have inherited such desperate thinking. They may not even recognize that it comes from Calvin, but it is wounding, can be paralyzing and always misleading.<sup>26</sup> This is because it makes God’s awesomely wonderful character seem monstrous in the extreme; because we are not to believe lies; and because it says “God does not love everybody.”<sup>27</sup>

“It suggests that God purposefully condemns most of humanity to hell. In an effort to take the edge off such horror, some Calvinists will say that God ‘passes others by’ or perhaps he chooses to ‘hold back his tender mercies.’ They will soften the tone so that the good character of God does not seem impugned. But the stark reality of Calvin’s election is this: God, with full intent

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 62

<sup>19</sup> The famous writer John Stott who wrote an article called “Stott on Hell” received such flack from colleagues that he chose not to allow a wider publication of his article. Perhaps he had received quite enough “hell” from them.

<sup>20</sup> Red Pill Gospel, p. 73

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 82, Emphasis mine.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 83

<sup>23</sup> I can attest to this as I shall never forget the first time I heard what Calvinism involved. I still shudder with horror.

<sup>24</sup> Red Pill Gospel, p. 88

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 99

<sup>26</sup> *Christianity Today*, Jul/Aug. 2020 includes an article, “Getting Born Again Backwards,” which urges these same concepts, without even using the word “Calvinism.” But the writer emphasizes the depravity of man, insisting that we cannot repent until we are born again.

<sup>27</sup> A.W. Pink, *Sovereignty of God*

and knowledge, chooses that some would suffer eternal torment in hell — there is no way around this... You may feel God to be incapable of such unimaginable cruelty, but according to those who created the Westminster Confession of Faith, the most revered document in all of Calvinism, they seemed to have no problem with it: ‘some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life; and others foreordained to everlasting death.’”<sup>28</sup>

Following this ghastly parody of Christianity, Mr. Maready’s response is enormously heartening: “If God desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of truth... then so, too, do I.” Amen.

Let us sum up the results of this twisted thinking: the following is a very partial summation of Calvin’s dictates: “Seven men and twenty-four women would end up being butchered at Calvin’s direction, some of whom killed themselves in prison rather than face the skilled torturers he employed. Although his thoroughness and religious zeal drove Calvin to attempt the creation of a man-made heavenly kingdom like no other, in the end he would follow directly along the twisted path of his Catholic forefathers, their superstitions obscuring the gospel of Jesus, their wickedness leading them to kill en masse.”<sup>29</sup>

“The reality is that Satan, on his very best day, could not come close to causing the agony and suffering as does the Calvinist God — according to his ‘good pleasure.’ Give yourself a moment to think about this. What could Satan do — what lives could he perpetually destroy? None, because Satan does not have the power of God and, according to Calvinism, God has decided the ultimate fate of everyone long before Satan even had a chance to tempt anyone. Therefore he is unable to affect anyone’s ultimate destination in any way. He is simply an annoyance along the journey because in the end, all of his tricks and temptations have no bearing on whether one goes to heaven or hell.”<sup>30</sup>

### And Now for the Good News

Mr. Maready describes being told as a child that heaven will be so wonderful. He was unimpressed. When he studied theology at university he was equally unimpressed. In fact he thought heaven sounded horrible, and he has me saying, “Me too!” He says that “The mythological depictions of both hell and heaven worked *to drive me away* from the gospel message for much of my life.” And he concludes that the immortal soul idea steals the joy from the Good News of the Bible *as nothing else can*, which is an important insight.

“As we have seen over the course of this book, the good news of the Bible is much grander than anything most Christians have ever been taught or imagined. Our refusal to worship and honor God as he is depicted throughout scripture has led to a distortion of his mercy

and goodness that is a complete inversion of his true nature. Our tendency to pluck words and scripture out of the context in which they appear has allowed us to create all sorts of boils, blisters, and carbuncles upon Christianity, man-made doctrines that were never, ever close to reflecting what the Bible — when viewed from high above — intended.”<sup>31</sup>

“Do you believe? This is the capital-g Gospel — not just a promise of the forgiveness of sins but something much more significant. If you have only ever understood the gospel to mean accepting Jesus Christ dying on the cross for the forgiveness of your sin, you may have never fully understood the profound hope and joy the gospel entails. *This* is what it means to be a Christian: believing in Jesus as the messiah, lord of the coming kingdom of God with creation restored and the promise of eternal life and the blissful reunions that will follow — embrace that hope and have faith that it will one day arrive. Hosanna! Hosanna in the highest! Shout it now! Even the stones will cry out if you don’t.”<sup>32</sup>

Author Maready has done the Christian world a great service, and the unbelieving world perhaps an even greater service as he invites them to come and have another look at a more honest and kinder faith. He holds out to them a more unadulterated form of the faith and says, Have a look at what God has promised, not what men have distorted. He invites them to come to know a Father and a Son who you would actually love to meet. Perhaps as has been said, it is not that Christianity has failed, but that Christianity has never been tried.

This is a brilliant book, bold and honest, and revealing of a Christian culture that is tragically lacking in authenticity. It seems that we have a crisis in Truth telling. ✧

### Jesus has a God!

Therefore he cannot be GOD!

- Matt. 27:46
- Mark 15:34
- John 20:17
- Rom. 15:6
- 2 Cor. 1:3
- 2 Cor. 11:31
- Eph. 1:3
- Eph. 1:17
- Heb. 1:9
- 1 Pet. 1:3
- Rev. 1:6
- Rev. 3:2
- Rev. 3:12 (4x!)

<sup>28</sup> *Red Pill Gospel*, pp. 114, 115

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51

“Within the early church, the ascription of an atoning function to Jesus’ death and belief in his resurrection and exaltation **did not lead to an abandonment of his kingdom message**...Paul’s few scattered reference to ‘kingdom’ suggests that it was a virtual **abbreviation** for the work that he was doing (Rom. 14:17; 1 Cor. 4:20; Col. 1:13; 4:11), **something still to be entered into or inherited in the future** (1 Cor. 6:9-10; 15:24, 50; Gal. 5:21; 1 Thess. 2:12; 2 Thess. 1:5), and something that was also christologically constituted so that he could regard **Jesus the Messiah and God’s kingdom as items intertwined together** (see Acts 28:31; Col. 1:12-14; Eph. 5:5; 2 Tim. 4:1).

“Luke’s précis [summary] of apostolic preaching gives the deliberate impression that the good news was closely connected to Jesus’ announcement of the kingdom, since the church retained the hope for Israel’s restoration as part of the overall divine purpose, even while it focused on Jesus’ death and resurrection (Acts 3:19-21; 8:12; 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31)...For those reasons I am skeptical of those who try to drive a wedge between the message of the Gospels and the gospel of Paul.”

— Michael Bird, *The Gospel of the Lord: How the Early Church Wrote the Story of Jesus*, 2004, p. 16

## Note to Our International Readers

Due to international mail service disruptions because of COVID-19, we have been unable to mail to several countries for the last few months. Now we are again able to mail to most of those countries. We would like to ask **all our international readers who receive the print version** of *Focus on the Kingdom* by mail, please send us an email at [anthonybuzzard@mindspring.com](mailto:anthonybuzzard@mindspring.com), and let us know if you would like to continue receiving *Focus on the Kingdom*, and if you would be willing/able to receive it by email to save postage.

## The Gospel of the Kingdom

Wiley Jones’ book from 1879, *The Gospel of the Kingdom Advocated in a Series of Ten Discourses*, is now also available in a highlighted PDF compiled by Jason Myers of Canada at [focusonthe kingdom.org/books](http://focusonthe kingdom.org/books) See next month’s issue of *Focus on the Kingdom* for an excerpt from the second discourse: “What Must I Do to Be Saved?”

## Comments

• “This past year has been hard for our family as we find ourselves disconnected from genuine fellowship because others aren’t interested in considering what we have to share — while we are so excited about it all! I have read not only your books but Edward Fudge’s book, Greg Deuble’s book, Kegan Chandler’s book, and we just got Forrest Maready’s book *Red Pill Gospel: Christianity,*

*Before It Was Ruined by Christians*. Thank you also for the online conference. The words spoken were greatly encouraging to us as a family — the instruction, the reminder that we aren’t alone, and the charge to not shy away from the serious implications of truth vs. lies. Contending for the faith is not for the faint of heart.” — *Pennsylvania*

• “It has been a few years now since I was blessed by God and Jesus to find clarity of my Christian faith through studying your work. I am so grateful for your tireless efforts. I continue to grow in faith and understanding which is of great comfort and enables me to share with all who would listen. Particularly useful is *The Amazing Aims and Claims of Jesus*. I have encouraged many to read it. It is very well written and structured to give the reader a clear overview of the whole biblical story focused, of course, around Jesus and the Kingdom. I have reached out to many and talk about Jesus and the Kingdom naturally to many I come across, mostly around work.” — *England*

• “I love your work and have been watching you for the last couple months. You helped me not get lost in the Jehovah’s Witness doctrine. I studied with them for a year and then I started to notice all kinds of false teaching that didn’t line up. Jesus is not Michael the Archangel and my salvation is not in Michael, so I’ve been looking for truth and I love the Kingdom teaching. If we start there everything will come into place (Matt. 6.10).” — *email*

• “I used to be a Jehovah’s Witness. I started going to meetings and studying with them on and off for about 7 years. I got baptised and left about two years later. I never got disfellowshipped. I just stopped going to meetings and voiced my doctrinal disapproval to a few elders of the congregation. The biggest shock I got was that they actually prioritise ‘the channel’ or governing body’s teachings over the Bible. This was very distressing for me. I actually thought that all JW’s followed the teachings of Christ and most of the Bible.” — *Australia*

• “I am sending another part of my translations of your books, which open my mind and heart to the workings of God’s word and spirit. That translation requires great care, which requires a great deal of time. I am very pleased and encouraged by this work. So far, I have not found anyone who would like to identify with the beliefs held by [focusonthe kingdom.org](http://focusonthe kingdom.org) and [kogmissions.com](http://kogmissions.com). I hope that these books translated into my native language can help to gain greater respect for the unitarian monotheism among Czechs and Slovaks.” — *Czech Republic*

• “I read the Bible at 19 and asked myself, ‘Where are the people who believe this?’ 40 years later I have found you and all the other good people at 21st Century Reformation (21stcr.org).” — *Illinois*

**Coming in mid-October:** The second edition of *The One God, the Father, One Man Messiah Translation: New Testament with Commentary*. See [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)