

# Focus on the Kingdom

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## The Wider Hope — a Doctrine Expressing Compassion and Justice

The appallingly false teaching that God intends to punish all those who are not saved with literally everlasting conscious torture has been well refuted by such writers as Edward Fudge in his *Fire that Consumes*. He argues biblically that future punishment for the incorrigibly wicked is to be annihilated, burned up (a dreadful enough fate!), not permanently tormented in full consciousness.

But there is an equally false idea held by many evangelicals, that God will destroy in the Lake of Fire all those billions of human beings who lived before the time of Jesus. This appears to us a blasphemous attack on the integrity and compassion of God, who is “gracious and merciful” (Ps. 86:15; 145:8).

The doctrine of the Wider Hope comes to our rescue, and its logic goes like this: The premise is that “God wants all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth, that God is one Person and that there is one mediator between God and men, the man Messiah Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:4-5), a brilliant summary of the Bible faith, and it needs to be preached and proclaimed every Sunday!

Our other premise is that salvation is only through believing and obeying Jesus and his Gospel of the Kingdom (Mark 1:14-15; Luke 4:43), and of course in his substitutionary death and his resurrection on the third day (Sunday, Luke 24:21). Peter stated this fact unambiguously in Acts 4:12: “There is salvation in no one else. There is no other name [system of belief] under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.”

With those two premises in place, we claim that all those who lived and died in Old Testament times cannot be held guilty for failure to receive and understand the great Gospel truths preached by Jesus in Mark 1:1, 14, 15; Luke 4:43; Acts 10:34-36; Luke 16:16; John 1:17. Millions who died before the time of Jesus had not heard of the salvation system offered by Jesus. The vast majority knew nothing of the coming Savior. But we know that those who lived and died in OT times will be raised in the second resurrection described in Revelation 20. They had died not knowing anything about salvation by believing and obeying Jesus (Heb. 5:9; John 3:36) — “the obedience of faith” which frames the book of Romans (1:5; 16:26). Those not in the first resurrection, which is for faithful believers in Messiah of all the ages,

will indeed return to life from death, which is sleep in the world of the dead (Greek *Hades*: “gravedom”; Ps. 13:3; Ecc. 9:5, 10; Dan. 12:2).

Paul refers to the centrally important subject of the Wider Hope in chapter 2 of Romans. He describes a class of persons who had never heard of the Law but who nevertheless carried out at least some of the principles of the Law “by nature” (Rom. 2:14-16). They complied with some of the great principles of right conduct, including in many cases a belief in the existence of God as seen in His hand in nature and the creation. But this did not mean that they had access to the saving Gospel of salvation as taught first by Jesus (Heb. 2:3; Mark 1:14-15. etc.).

The logic of the Wider Hope demands then that those billions living in BC times must receive, not a second chance, but a first chance which they never had.

The great and logical reason for this was stated by Jesus in John 15:22, 24. About the religious leaders of his day, the Pharisees (the more conservative) and the Sadducees (the more liberal), Jesus made this remarkable statement: “If I had not come and told them, they would not be guilty, but now that I have told them, they are guilty.” This opinion from Jesus based on the Bible, which for him and us is our “Constitution,” expresses a basic and reasonable principle of justice. A person cannot be guilty of breaking laws or failing to believe truth which he could not reasonably or possibly have known.

A humorous example to make our point would be this: If a policeman stopped me for going 80 miles per hour in a 30 mile per hour zone, I would not have a reasonable excuse for pleading that I thought that the number of the road (Hwy 80) was in fact the speed limit. Such ignorance would be without excuse. If on the other hand I had lived in the time period preceding that of Jesus, I could be forgiven for not complying with the New Covenant Torah of Messiah standards of the Sermon on the Mount. A person’s reasonable ignorance of a law of conduct would be reckoned, as the word is often used in contemporary politics in the USA, as “exculpatory” — clearing him from guilt.

The Bible is a legal document. God expresses His will for human kind through prophets and in the words of the ultimate prophet like Moses, Jesus the Messiah (Acts 3:22; 7:37). We will be judged by our compliance or non-compliance with the words of Jesus, and Jesus speaking in the Apostles and other writers of the Bible. Jesus stated this clear principle over and over again (see John 12:48).

The clear sense of what Jesus said is alas often obscured by endless wrangling over “salvation by works” or “salvation by faith.” The simple solution to that unnecessarily complex issue is that salvation in Scripture is by **obedience to Jesus** and his agents. Hebrews 5:9 is an excellent summary verse on this subject, but how often do you hear it mentioned? “Salvation is given to those who obey Jesus.” Jesus said, “Those who believe in me will be saved.” He immediately defined “belief” by stating its opposite as disobedience: John 3:36 (“the obedience of faith,” Rom. 1:5; 16:26).

A wider hope for those who have never heard does not, it must be said, lead us to belief in “universalism,” the notion that every human being is bound to be saved! That idea would fly in the face of such alarming passages as Hebrews 10. It would also interfere with the toughest of all of Jesus’ words: “Multitudes will say to me in that future day, ‘Lord, lord, did we not preach and do miracles in your name [as representing you]?’” Jesus’ reply is the alarming response that “I never recognized you, you workers of iniquity” (Matt. 7:22-23).

In that same context Jesus had just spoken of the extreme danger and threat of “false prophets” (v. 15), that is those who preach claiming to be speaking for Christ, while in fact deceiving the public. Hence the great prophetic warning of Hosea that “my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Hos. 4:6). And it is the fault of the public if they do not understand and obey: “**They** have closed **their** eyes,” quoted by Jesus in Matthew 13:15 and by Paul in Acts 28:27.

While we fully delight in the wider mercy God shows towards those who have never heard and cannot be judged on the basis of what they could not possibly have known, we who have heard the Gospel of the Kingdom and been exposed to truth should pay even greater attention to the “great salvation” which “had its beginning in the teaching given by Jesus” and was confirmed with miracles by those who heard Jesus preach the Gospel of the Kingdom (Heb. 2:3-4).

The Wider Hope for those who never heard must never induce in us a sense of complacency as we bear in mind the stupendous truth given us by Paul that people are “perishing because they refused to accept a passion for truth, in order to be saved” (2 Thess. 2:10). Paul explicitly said that it was because people did not receive a passion for the truth in order to be saved that God then “gave them over to a spirit of delusion, so that they would believe what is false” (v. 11).

Jesus said, “From everyone who has been given much, much will be required” (Luke 12:48). That too is a fair principle of justice. If God has allowed us to see the truth of salvation by believing the Gospel of the Kingdom (Mk. 1:14-15), then we must be all the more conscientious in holding on to and obeying that truth. ✧

## **The Hand of God**

### **A Journey from Death to Life by the Abortion Doctor Who Changed His Mind**

**Bernard Nathanson, M.D.**

#### **Synopsis and Update by Barbara Buzzard**

This compelling book describes the self-confessed moral squalor of the man who led the abortion culture. It is a deeply moving and chilling account of how he became corrupt and how he was rescued by the Hand of God. It would seem that Dr. Bernard Nathanson knows the abortion issue and its industry as no one else. As he says, “I am one of those who helped usher in this barbaric age. I worked hard to make abortion legal, affordable, and available on demand. In 1968, I was one of the three founders of the National Abortion Rights Action League. I ran the largest abortion clinic in the United States, and as its director I oversaw tens of thousands of abortions. I have performed thousands myself. How could this have happened? How could I have done this?”<sup>1</sup>

#### **2019 Lie of the Year**

He was responsible for making up and telling and selling the lies that helped to propel the Roe v. Wade ruling. He has been on record for years now admitting those lies and repenting of them. The media, however, seem to have cemented them into history where they have taken on a life as facts; i.e. it is ubiquitously believed that prior to Roe v. Wade thousands of women died in backstreet alleys due to illegal abortions. Ask yourself if you believe this. Sometimes vindication takes a long time. Please note well that a report of **12/24/19** states that the “Planned Parenthood claim that thousands died in illegal abortions **is a *Washington Post* lie of the year...**In 1972, the number of deaths in the United States from legal abortions was 24 and from illegal abortions 39, according to the CDC. There is no evidence that in the years immediately preceding the Supreme Court’s decision, thousands of women died every year in the United States from illegal abortions. Advocates hurt their cause when they use figures that do not withstand scrutiny. *These numbers were debunked in 1969 — 50 years ago — by a statistician celebrated by Planned Parenthood. There’s no reason to use them today.*”<sup>2</sup> A Lifenews.com writer: “I would add something much stronger. *These people are shameless.*”

Dr. Nathanson tells us that in order to understand how he fell into this debauchery we must know something about his father and “his gods.” Of his father, he says: “He was a formidable, dominant force in my

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Bernard Nathanson, *The Hand of God, A Journey from Death to Life by the Abortion Doctor Who Changed His Mind*, p. 5

<sup>2</sup> Lifenews.com, 12/24/19

life and in many ways forged the ruthless, nihilistic pagan attitudes and beliefs that finally drove me to unleash — with a handful of conspirators — the abortion monster.”<sup>3</sup> *Not to know* what is at the root of the willingness to kill the unborn puts one in a very dangerous situation. Likewise, falling prey to thinking “the lesser of two evils,” or “women must have the right to choose” would, in fact, bless “the abortion monster.”

While Nathanson had a first-class education, he grew up in a psychological abyss without, as he says, a seedling of faith to nourish him; his father was a Jewish atheist who had turned against religion. Nathanson sums it up this way: “In the absence of any but the most crass instruction in interpersonal moral order, in the presence of a contempt for ethical relations with women, indeed for women themselves, in the expectation that I would blindly follow in the bloody footsteps of this warped and twisted man [his father], a monster was germinating within me. The monster recognized nothing but utility, respected nothing but strength of purpose, craved love — and then perverted it.”<sup>4</sup> Note that his contempt for women formed a part of who he was in his abortion work. Our crazed society has turned this on its head and accuses the one who *is not for abortion* of contempt. He describes his childhood as torment. He believed the Jewish God to be forbidding and cruel, leaving him with an aching and painful void, and therefore Nathanson became apostate at age 13. His father, he says, was a deeply confused, fragile, driven man with no point to his life.

### Hypocritical Hippocratic Medicine?

As a medical doctor, Nathanson noted that traditionally we assume a high degree of personal virtue in physicians, especially with respect to the Hippocratic Oath which they have signed. And yet this is what he actually found: “As to the prohibition on giving ‘deadly medicine’ (euthanasia), I recall well the knowing winks and nudges of the residents in pediatrics when we made our nursery rounds in my fourth year and inquired about the mongoloid child that had been admitted to the nursery the day before, only to be counted among the missing today. Hypocritical Hippocratic medicine, at the whim of the imperial physician.”<sup>5</sup>

Nathanson signed the oath which had been amended in 1948 (due to the Nazi war crimes) and which included this line: “I will retain the utmost respect for human life from the time of conception.”

One of Nathanson’s 75,000 encounters with abortion was with his own child. He writes, “The night before the abortion...we both wept, for the baby we were about to lose, and for the love we both knew would be irreparably

damaged by what we were about to do. It would never be the same for us.”<sup>6</sup> This I found revealing and shocking. How absolutely tragic that their sorrow did not lead them to forego this crime. To think that they both *knew* that the price they would have to pay would kill their love (as well as their baby!) and yet they continued on...

The star of a massively popular TV show sings about loving abortion. No such thing as shame; only humor and self-love. A love of abortion signifies something which is more than a little unhealthy. *A love of abortion is a love of evil* and that would bring one’s doom. Nathanson regards it as a perversion. He views abortionists as odious quacks and hacks, mutilators, murderers and dirtbags with no ethical or moral boundaries, vulturous scavengers and lowlifes.

### A Revolting Extravaganza

Nathanson says of his experience: “It served as my introductory excursion into the satanic world of abortion.”<sup>7</sup> He later performed an abortion himself on another of his children. “You ask if perhaps for a fleeting moment or so I experienced a flicker of regret, a microgram of remorse? No and no. And that, dear reader, is the mentality of the abortionist: another job well done, another demonstration of the moral neutrality of advanced technology in the hands of the amoral...what I felt in my starved, impoverished soul must have been closely akin to the swelling satisfaction of Adolf Eichmann, as he saw his rightly scheduled trains bearing Jews to the extermination camps.”<sup>8</sup>

“The arrogance of those practicing medicine has always been recognized as an ugly appendage of the profession, but the massive hubris of the abortionist was and continues to be astonishing. For every ten thousand Ruths [the mother of his child] there is one abortionist: icy; conscienceless; remorselessly perverting his medical skills; defiling his ethical charge; and helping, nay seducing, with his clinical calm, his oh-so-comforting professionalism, women into the act that comes closest to self-slaughter.”<sup>9</sup>

Nathanson describes the cultural changes happening in the U.S. as he fought to make abortion legal: *the drug culture, the sexual revolution, the massive infiltration of pornography, violent crime, anti-authoritarian attitudes, the contemptuous denigration of religion*; all these helped to pave the way for legal abortions. He notes that the manipulation of the media was crucial, but easy.

“As I look back across the twenty-five years separating me from that revolting extravaganza playing itself out on the bodies of pregnant women and their slaughtered babies, I am struck by the uncritical nature

<sup>3</sup> *The Hand of God*, p. 5

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 19, 20

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62

of the task we had set for ourselves, by the *moral and spiritual vacuum* at the core of this fantastic operation, by our unquestioned certainty of the high level of moral rectitude on which we operated. And yet, the thing was *so obviously sordid*. *Why couldn't we make the link between the ethical and the moral, between the shoddy practices and shabby practitioners, the evident greed and callous motives, between the crassness of the enterprise and those involved in it, between all these ethical indicators and the grotesque immorality of the act itself?*"<sup>10</sup>

And this, ladies and gentlemen, is where we come in. Dr. Nathanson was the one who paved the way for abortion on demand; he testifies to us that abortion is and was demonic; that it is a perversion. What do we do with this information? It will not fit well with the current cry for choice. It will defeat anyone, Christian or not, who attempts to say that there are two ways of looking at this. Evil is evil. Why do we not believe Nathanson? What do we say about this greatest moral evil of all time?

I would think that anyone newly coming to this information would see the world in a different light. I would hope that it would so move us to do whatever we must do to help spread the truth and to make abortion unthinkable. The churches, in the main, have not helped their people to know and act upon the truth or even to be upset by this atrocity.

Dr. Nathanson repeatedly returns to the core of the question: *How did such unspeakable savagery become acceptable?* After all, the doctors doing abortions had signed the same Hippocratic Oath that he signed ("first do no harm"). Nathanson once described himself as a moral coward, but it is with no cowardice that he examines his own heart as well as the medical atmosphere which gave rise to such savagery. He puts it this way: "It has been my experience that only those who have an inflexible inner spiritual column supporting the immense weight of medical obligations and responsibilities survive intact the lure of the worldly temptations in the medical world: the uninterrupted flow of money, the drumfire of flattery, and the inebriating effects of special privilege."<sup>11</sup> Nathanson then makes the point that only a small percentage of doctors who harm their patients face sanctions. Then follows a catalog of horror stories proving his point.

### The First Crack

Nathanson attributes to the Hand of God the use of ultrasound to function as a window to the womb. He says that for the first time he began to think about what he had been doing, that ultrasound opened up a whole new world. He stopped doing abortions for all but the

questionable "medical" reasons. Soon he stopped doing them at all and confessed that he had presided at over sixty thousand **deaths**. He began writing articles and a book.<sup>12</sup> His article in the *New England Journal of Medicine* produced the largest response ever, but he also received death threats and ugly mail. He had come to realize that *there was no reason for an abortion at any time, that the person in the womb is a living human being and that he could not continue to wage war on the most defenseless of human beings*. This contradicts what most people "know" — that there must be an exception for the life of the mother.<sup>13</sup>

"Corrupt language, and you corrupt thought. Abortion is like that. It demands normalizing the abnormal. It requires redefinition and schizophrenic reasoning, or as Nathanson calls it 'The eclipse of reason.'"<sup>14</sup>

### Did You Know?

- The most dangerous place for an African-American is in the womb.
- Abortion even in the first trimester is classified by insurance carriers as major surgery.
- "The fertilization of an egg by the sperm is one of the greatest wonders of nature, an event in which magnificently small fragments of...life are driven by cosmic forces to their appointed end, the growth of a living human being. As a spectacle, it can be compared only with an eclipse of the sun, or the eruption of a volcano."<sup>15</sup>
- "Ironically, these nine months (in the womb) may be the most important nine months in our lives. That's when our organs are forming, our brain is forming, and we experience our first sensory impressions. In the womb, we can distinguish one kind of music from another. I have put Mozart in a tape player and held it against a womb at, say, seven months, and the baby moved a little, but when I put Van Halen on, the baby was jumping all over the place. The first nine months are a learning time, a time when we are organizing ourselves. To disrupt or abort a life at this point is intolerable — it is a crime. I don't make any bones about using that word: Abortion is a crime."<sup>16</sup>
- The casualty list of the unborn is so long that it would take *over nine hundred* Vietnam Memorial walls to list all who have perished.

<sup>12</sup> *Aborting America*

<sup>13</sup> U.S. Surgeon General for 26 years, Dr. C. Everett Koop also agrees, contrary to what is almost universally believed, that never in his 37 years of practice did he ever see a case where the baby had to be killed to save the life of the mother.

<sup>14</sup> John Ensor, *Answering the Call*, p. 55

<sup>15</sup> *The Hand of God*, pp. 129, 130

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 130

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109

- The most brilliant musician in all history may not even have been born yet; so too, the greatest scientist, writer, physician, etc.

- Western Europe, though progressive and secular, has *more restrictive* abortion laws than the U.S! In Germany and Belgium nearly all abortions after 12 weeks are illegal. Counseling and a waiting period are mandatory. Denmark has all sorts of restrictions after 12 weeks. In France it is much more difficult to abort after the 12<sup>th</sup> week. Sweden allows abortion until the 18<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy and bans most after the 22<sup>nd</sup> week. In that four-week “gray” period a woman can get an abortion only if it is approved by the National Board of Health and Welfare. Why is our position so *extreme* compared to that of Europe? Why do these “socially enlightened” countries find *unacceptable* the practices we approve of in the U.S.? It does not reflect well on our society.<sup>17</sup>

### The Silent Scream

It was actually Nathanson’s curiosity about what goes on in an abortion that led him to ask a friend who was doing 20 or 30 abortions a day to put an ultrasound on the next one he did and tape it for him. When this friend viewed the tapes with Nathanson, he was so affected that he never did another abortion! Nathanson says that he was shaken to the very roots of his soul. This tape became the film known as *The Silent Scream*, depicting a twelve-week-old fetus being torn to pieces by a combination of suction and crushing.

In **1987 (please note this date)** Dr. Nathanson received a letter from a former employee, apprising him of the sale of infant body parts from abortions. Much has been revealed to us over the past few years with the eleven undercover videos showing that Planned Parenthood is apparently engaging in the sale of aborted organs and tissue. But we somehow think this is recent! The sale of infant body parts was going on in 1987, i.e. 33 years ago!

Nathanson says, “It is impossible to separate the issue of abortion from the use of the tissue obtained therefrom. If German physicians had harvested vital tissues and organs from the six million Jewish victims of the Holocaust and used them to save gravely wounded German soldiers, that good effect would in no way have mitigated the horror or excused the murders.”<sup>18</sup> Please see the film/documentary on YouTube “180 Degrees” by Ray Comfort for further enlightenment as to the similarities between *that* holocaust and our current one.

“There is no doubt that the medical use of fetal tissue would cause the number of abortions to increase. Even leaving aside the all-too-real possibility of third-world fetus farms, it has been my experience — based

on seventy-five thousand abortions — that a great many pregnant women remain in doubt even to the door of the abortion clinic. (This accounts for the success sidewalk counselors have in diverting so many women from the abortion chambers.)”<sup>19</sup> I include this last sentence as encouragement for those of us who would like to be and are there on those sidewalks to save lives, loving both mother and child. Please see the most watched pro-life video yet: Dr. Anthony Levatino: *2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester Surgical Abortion D & E* ([https://youtu.be/jgw4X7Dw\\_3k](https://youtu.be/jgw4X7Dw_3k)). 34% of pro-choice women who watched this video have turned against abortion.

### The Journey

Nathanson, in his journey from abortion doctor to pro-life advocate, author and speaker, did not follow the usual pattern of moving from pro-life to belief in God. He tells us that he went through a ten-year “transitional” time, a time of despising himself and of very serious self-examination. “The keenest of human tortures is to be judged without a law, and mine had been a lawless universe.”<sup>20</sup>

His heart was softened by a pro-life rally which he describes: “They prayed, they supported and encouraged each other, they sang hymns of joy, and they constantly reminded each other of the absolute prohibition against violence. It was, I suppose, the sheer intensity of the love and prayer that astonished me. They prayed for the unborn babies, for the confused and frightened pregnant women, and for the doctors and nurses in the clinic. They even prayed for the police and the media who were covering the event. They prayed for each other but never for themselves. And I wondered: How can these people give of themselves for a constituency that is (and always will be) mute, invisible, and unable to thank them?...But it was not until I saw the spirit put to the test on those bitterly cold demonstration mornings, with pro-choicers hurling the most fulsome epithets at them, the police surrounding them, the media openly unsympathetic to their cause, the federal judiciary fining and jailing them, and municipal officials threatening them — all through it they sat smiling, quietly praying, singing,...that I began seriously to question what indescribable Force generated them to this activity...And for the first time in my entire adult life, I began to entertain seriously the notion of God — a god who problematically had led me through the proverbial circles of hell, only to show me the way to redemption and mercy through His grace. The thought violated every eighteenth-century certainty I had cherished; it instantly converted my past into a vile bog of sin and evil; it indicted me and convicted me of high crimes against those who had loved me, and against those whom I did not even know; and simultaneously —

<sup>17</sup> Information from PragerU.com

<sup>18</sup> *The Hand of God*, pp. 167, 168

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 168, 169

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 190

miraculously — it held out a shimmering sliver of Hope to me, in the growing belief that Someone had died for my sins and my evil two millennia ago.”<sup>21</sup>

“I am no longer alone. It has been my fate to wander the globe in search of the One without Whom I am doomed, but now I seize the hem of His robe in desperation, in terror, in celestial access to the purest need I have ever known.”<sup>22</sup>

Dr. Nathanson’s repentance is exemplary and his gratitude profound. So too is the beauty of repentance and forgiveness available for anyone who has been involved with abortion. Repentance frees one from the grasp of this culture of death. When Dr. Nathanson began to admit and comprehend the Hand of God, he also began to be healed and comforted by the Heart of God.

“To love God is to love life. To be Christlike is to be pro-life. The pro-life movement and the Christian faith are synonymous. Where there is one, there will be the other — for one cannot be had without the other.”<sup>23</sup> ✧

## “The Kingdom of the LORD in the hands of the sons of David” (2 Chron. 13:8)

A very popular but misleading idea defines the Kingdom of God, Jesus’ favorite topic, as a Kingdom “in the heart” — a subjective way of life and thinking *now*. This very mistaken mis-definition of Jesus and Paul’s core concept of salvation (Luke 4:43; Acts 20:24-25) is based often on a faulty translation from the King James Version and some others of Luke 17:21: “The Kingdom of God is within you.” A non-literal, interior Kingdom of the heart is foreign to Jesus’ fundamental, very Jewish understanding of the Kingdom of God.

The New Testament is based squarely on that 75% of the Bible which we call the “Old Testament” — the Hebrew Bible. We today have exactly the same set of books as Jesus had when he went into the synagogue (though in a different order).

A very clear and instructive definition of the Kingdom is found in 2 Chronicles 13:5, 8. A king of Judah, Abijah, said to his fellow Israelites of the ten tribes, “Do you not know that the LORD God of Israel gave the rule over Israel forever to David and his sons by a covenant of salt?...So now you [Israel of the ten tribes] intend to resist the Kingdom of the LORD in the hands of the sons of David.”

The Kingdom of the LORD (or of God) is a political, territorial, geographical Kingdom which as we know was promised to Jesus in Luke 1:31-33. Jesus’

career and job description was announced to his mother Mary: “You will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David; and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his Kingdom will have no end.” That thrilling information formed the basis of the Gospel of the Kingdom which as Jesus said in Mark 1:14-15 is the essential foundation of true Christianity, the only true faith which must agree with the very words of Jesus.

True Christianity *begins* with the words of Jesus (Mark 1:14-15; Acts 10:34-36). I trust that our readers will be suitably shocked by the appalling opposition of some so-called believers when they put themselves in contradiction to the message of Jesus:

Dr. James Kennedy of Coral Ridge Ministries (he died in 2007):

**“Many people today think that the essence of Christianity is the teachings of Jesus. That isn’t so. The teachings of Jesus are somewhat secondary to Christianity. If you read the epistles of the apostle Paul, which make up about half of the New Testament, you’ll see almost nothing whatsoever said about the teachings of Jesus. Not one of his parables is mentioned. In fact, throughout the rest of the New Testament there’s little reference to the teachings of Jesus. In the Apostles’ creed, the most universally held Christian creed, there is no reference to the teachings of Jesus or to the example of Jesus. In fact, in recounting Christ’s earthly life, the creed states simply that He was ‘born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and was buried.’ It mentions only two days in Jesus’s life — that of His birth and that of His death. **Christianity centers not in the teachings of Jesus but in the person of Jesus as the incarnate God who came into the world to take upon himself our guilt and to die in our place.**”<sup>24</sup>**

Dr. Harold O.J. Brown: “Christianity takes its name from its founder, or rather from what he was called, the Christ. Buddhism is also named for its founder. And non-Moslems often call Islam Mohammedanism. But while Buddhism and Islam are based primarily on the *teaching* of the Buddha and Mohammed, respectively, **Christianity is based primarily on the person of Christ. The Christian faith is *not* belief in his teaching, but in what is taught *about* him.** The appeal of Protestant liberals to ‘believe as Jesus believed,’ rather than to believe in Jesus, is a dramatic transformation of the fundamental nature of Christianity.”<sup>25</sup>

These statements are blatantly anti-Christian.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., pp. 193, 4

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 196

<sup>23</sup> *Answering the Call*, p. 38.

<sup>24</sup> D. James Kennedy and Jerry Newcombe, *The Presence of a Hidden God*, 2008, chapter “How I Know Jesus Is God,” p. 82, emphasis added.

<sup>25</sup> *Heresies*, 1984, p. 13.

For Jesus and the New Testament the Kingdom of God is firstly and primarily that Davidic, political Kingdom defined by the Hebrew Bible. A very occasional verse can be cited as evidence of the presence of the Kingdom in the Spirit now, but the Kingdom now is never the *first* meaning of Kingdom of God. As a professor at the University of Chicago noted, “At the very best the passages that can be quoted in favor of an existing, present kingdom are exceedingly few, while those which more naturally must be interpreted to refer to the future kingdom are all but constant...Of the two uses of the term ‘kingdom’ the eschatological [future] must be chosen as fundamental.”<sup>26</sup> ✧

## Comments

• “Since I was 19 years old I have had a deep longing to dedicate my life to God. This aspiration mainly came to me in the form of seeking ordination as a monk. I come from a Catholic background but during those beginning years on my spiritual path, I was drawn to Buddhism and later on came back to Catholicism (etc.). After an extensive period of time that compasses several years of personal study of scripture, prayer, contemplation and guidance from God, I have reached the realization with much joy and peace in my heart that the teachings being spread by you are the true teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ (biblical unitarianism). I have to add again that I’m very grateful to you not only for your scholarly guidance but also your spiritual guidance through your written works and videos. Now I pray that I can be baptized.” — *Taiwan*

• “Words cannot say the thank-you’s that you mean to us. We truly share with you the abuse, hate, name-calling, yet we keep going forward. Thank you for showing us, sharing with us, saying with us, ‘Keep on keeping on for King Jesus.’” — *North Carolina*

• “I have recently come to the truth about the lies of the Trinity doctrine, which led me to your books about the Kingdom. I thank you for being so bold in your convictions as this information about the Kingdom has been life-changing for me. I am almost done reading your book *The Coming Kingdom of the Messiah*, and I have so much more hope in the Kingdom to come now that I understand it. Now I am looking for a non-Trinitarian church.” — *Oklahoma*

• “I was a Sabbatarian for a while, but generally I am a follower of Jesus Christ and I do not belong to any church organization. I view the home church as the biblical model with participation of all believers in the congregation with Jesus as live leader (1 Cor. 14:26). I am not unitarian, but I am near, because Trinitarianism has many problems and philosophical characteristics.” — *Greece*

• “Glory be to God for His kindness and mercies that He has given us through His fervent love to us to be called His heirs. I have been a good reader of *Focus on the Kingdom* since I came to get to know Restoration Fellowship the year 2013 January up to this moment. Since my life all along I have been in a SDA church but from the very time I started reading with you I have learnt a lot about the Trinity and the true Gospel.” — *Tanzania*

• “Though I grew up in a Catholic family, I never identified as a Catholic. Since childhood I always found it to be a strange religion and wanted no part in it. The real struggle for me was departing from the Trinity. This doctrine was very much ingrained in my mind. When God gave me a desire to know Him and seek Him, everywhere I searched told me God was triune and so I adopted this belief. The more I searched the Scriptures and longed for God I knew something was wrong with this doctrine. My desire is to know God and know His Son and I desire this for others. I want people to come to the knowledge of truth and love God and His Son just as I do and to be freed from the deceptions of this world. I have shared my faith with my friends and family, but no one receives me. They reject the words I share; they usually get angry and offended. I tell my kids there is only one God and that is the God of Jesus Christ. And if you know this and believe this, you know more than the rest of the world. Every night my son asks me to tell him about God; he is 4 years old. And he always responds ‘I believe you, Mommy.’ What a blessing!” — *Canada*

• “I always am happy to see Kenneth LaPrade’s articles in *Focus on the Kingdom*. I have appreciated his articles so much because they hit home with me. After this latest one in the November issue (“Disclaimer City: Questioning Modern Pentecostal Roots”), I decided I needed to write and express my gratitude to him for putting down in writing so many of the things I have felt for years but could not express. This latest article moved me to tears.” — *email*

• “I enjoy the teachings you and Dan Gill do. Keep up the good work. I am a semi driver so I plug the teachings from youtube into my stereo and listen during the day. I also ordered your book *The Doctrine of the Trinity: Christianity’s Self-Inflicted Wound*, which has been a blessing and awesome study guide. These teachings and truths make the Bible smooth, the way it should be, and no longer do I have to worry about contradictions. I’m going to continue to promote Deuteronomy 6:4 and the way the Gospel should be. Glory to God and hallelujah!” — *Virginia*

<sup>26</sup> Shailer Mathews, *The Messianic Hope in the New Testament*, 1905, p. 80.

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