

# Focus on the Kingdom

Vol. 22 No. 9

Anthony Buzzard, editor

June, 2020

## 29th Theological Conference

*A Gathering of Truth Seekers, A Forum for Truth Finders*

**RESCHEDULED to July 30-August 2, 2020**

Calvin Center, Hampton, GA

Please see [theologicalconference.org](http://theologicalconference.org)

## What's in a Name?

by Robin Todd, Washington

After Jesus says that he manifested the Father's "name to the men whom You gave me out of the world," he adds, "and they have kept Your word. Now they have come to know that everything You have given me is from You; for the words which You gave me I have given to them; and they received them" (17:6-8). Notice that the words God gave to Jesus, Jesus then passed along to his followers. Manifesting God's name has the meaning here of manifesting God's words. A person's name is a reflection of that person's words and of course the purpose behind those words. Let's look at this some more.

Again Jesus says in John 17:11-17: "Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given me, that they may be one even as we are. While I was with them I was keeping them in Your name which You have given me...I have given them Your word...Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth." Does the beginning of this set of verses mean that Jesus has been given the name of YHWH? No, these verses mean that the words and purposes that the Father has, have also been given to Jesus the Son. But how do we know that God's name is so closely connected to what He is all about, what He says and purposes? Because of Exodus 3, verses 13-15.

Moses wanted to know God's name. "God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM' [or, I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE...YHWH, translated LORD in English Bibles]; and He said, 'Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, I AM [YHWH, LORD] has sent me to you.'" But then He goes on to tell us what His name means in practical terms to humanity: "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations."

What practical meaning does God's name, YHWH, the LORD, have for you and me? Simply yet profoundly, that He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob! And this has significance because God made certain promises regarding eternal inheritance to that family — those three

men, and their descendants. These promises constituted a Gospel that was first preached to Abraham by God; and he was accounted righteous because he believed them (Gal. 3:6-9). And so did Isaac, as well as Jacob. Jesus preached that same Gospel, which he called the Kingdom of God! "And if we are Christ's we are Abraham's seed and heirs of the same promises" (Gal. 3:29). Therefore Jesus proclaimed (or "manifested") God's name — that is, the LORD who defines Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to whom He made specific promises.

Around 7,000 times in the Old Testament, God's name YHWH appears, translated LORD in our English Bibles. That means that when I read LORD in those 7,000 occurrences, I remember He's the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and remember His purpose for humanity regarding the promises regarding our Kingdom of God inheritance. God's name, YHWH, is directly tied to the practical understanding of His words in the form of promises and purpose, starting with Abraham and ending with Jesus in the book of Revelation. So when Jesus says in John 17:26: "I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known," he is speaking of the Gospel of the Kingdom, the Gospel of God which is based on God's promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The name "LORD" is not one-to-one in meaning with "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." But in practical terms, one defines the other. His name is what He is all about. ✧

## The Christian's Destiny: Rulership with Jesus in the Coming World Government

Few students of Christianity seem to be aware that believers in Jesus are destined for royal office. An extraordinary conspiracy of silence hides from churchgoers the very point and final purpose of the Christian life. Yet the biblical writers knew very well what was involved in discipleship.

Our New Testament documents record that Jesus came heralding the Messianic Kingdom of God (Matt. 4:23; 9:35). He called this the Gospel. With his Gospel of the Kingdom message Jesus came recruiting executives for the universal government which the Father had promised to entrust to him. If any truth is calculated to inspire and embolden, and humble the people of God, it is that Christian believers — those properly instructed in the truth and baptized according to the New Testament pattern — are now ambassadors residing in the alien

territory of the present evil world-system (2 Cor. 5:20; Eph. 6:20; Gal. 1:4), awaiting the return of their master to make them co-rulers in the new world system of the future (Dan. 7:18, 22, 27). For this astonishing privilege the faithful are to strive now with the help of God's spirit. This, patently, is what the Bible teaches, and the reader is challenged to reconsider any other view which he may have accepted without careful consideration of the biblical facts.

It cannot be denied that Jesus was preoccupied above all with the Gospel message about the Kingdom of God (Luke 4:43; Mark 1:14-15; Matt. 13:19) as the dynamic tool by which converts were moved to abandon all for him and the Kingdom. Entrance into the Kingdom of God was the supreme goal at the end of the Christian road. That goal inspired early Christian sacrifice, even of life itself: "Through much tribulation we are destined to enter the Kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). All present trials are to be borne cheerfully in view of the spectacular prize awaiting the faithful believer at the return of Jesus to inaugurate the Kingdom on earth. This theme underlies all the New Testament writings, as well as those of the Hebrew prophets.

Jesus cannot be understood apart from his Jewish, Old Testament background. His mind was saturated with the words of the Old Testament prophets. For him it was axiomatic to believe that God had revealed to His servants the prophets the secrets of the future (Dan. 2:45; Matt. 24:15). The book of Daniel, for example, had conferred on the faithful in Israel an outline of world history in which the Son of Man, the Messiah (Dan. 7:13), was to play the leading role. Jesus knew himself to be the Son of Man (his favorite self-designation), a figure whom Daniel had seen in a remarkable vision. The Son of Man was seen appearing before the court of heaven to receive a *Kingdom* and kingship (Dan. 7:14). Daniel's seventh chapter provides us with a fundamentally important insight into Jesus' mission and the destiny of his followers. The meaning of this chapter is in no sense difficult. Neglect of the Old Testament has long deprived the average churchgoer of these basic building blocks of Jesus' saving Gospel message. It is unfamiliarity with this material, not the material itself, which may create difficulty. Christians are everywhere in the Bible urged to search and study.

All scholars agree (and it is obvious to every reader of Scripture) that the Kingdom of God was the central topic of all Jesus' teachings. What Jesus meant by the Kingdom of God may be readily understood by tracing the Kingdom to its Old Testament source in Daniel 2:44. Looking at the close of the present era of human history, Daniel foresaw that "the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left to another people; it will crush and put to an end all these [previously mentioned] kingdoms, but it

will itself endure forever." Its location is to be "under heaven" (Dan. 7:27) — on this earth.

Micah gives us words reminiscent of Jesus' command that we are to pray "May Your Kingdom come!" The Kingdom is the time when the Lord God will rule on Mount Zion (Mic. 4:7-8). The Kingdom of God is thus clearly political and geographical. The Kingdom of God Gospel, the Christian Gospel, promises a time when the nations will beat their weapons of war into harmless farm tools, and "never again train for war" (Mic. 4:3; Isa. 2:4).

This Kingdom to be set up by "the God of Heaven" quite naturally became known as "the Kingdom of Heaven" or "the Kingdom of God" (the terms are synonymous: Matt. 19:23-24), and it was that Kingdom which Jesus came to announce as good news, the Christian Gospel (Matt. 4:23; Luke 4:43). Jesus evidently believed, with Daniel, that the vision "made known to the king [Nebuchadnezzar] what will take place in the future" (Dan. 2:45). Jesus knew that he, of all members of the human race, was the chosen King appointed as royal ruler in that great future Kingdom of God on earth. He saw his task as inviting as many as would believe him and his Gospel message (Mark 1:14-15; Matt. 13:19) to prepare now for participation as executives and governors in the future Kingdom, when Jesus returns at his Parousia (Second Coming).

### Daniel 7

There is further vital information about the Kingdom of God to be found in Daniel 7. In verse 11 the dominion of the "beast," clearly an evil ruler, is taken away when he is "slain and his body given to the burning fire" (cp. Rev. 19:20), and then "a Son of Man," the Messiah, is presented before God. "And to him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, so that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away, and his kingdom is one which will not be destroyed" (7:14).

As is well known, Jesus always referred to himself as the Son of Man described in Daniel 7, thus claiming to be the king to whom the Kingdom of God would be entrusted. Before the high priest of Israel, Jesus affirmed that he was indeed "the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed" (i.e. the Son of God, Mark 14:61). In the same breath Jesus quotes Daniel's vision and promises that the Son of Man will be seen "coming with the clouds of heaven" (14:62). Evidently the title "Son of Man" is an equivalent for the titles "Son of God" and "Messiah"; and this is exactly what we would expect from reading about the Messianic function ascribed to the Son of Man in Daniel.

Matthew 16:16 had already equated Messiah with "the Son of the living God": "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." All these titles are purely Messianic and have nothing whatsoever to do with the post-biblical theories about the so-called two natures of Jesus, a concept which both Jesus and Paul would have

found baffling. It was only when the Messiahship of Jesus was misunderstood by the Greeks who began to dominate the Church after apostolic times that the reality of the coming Messianic Kingdom of God on earth was largely obscured or lost. Contemporary theology continues to weary itself in an attempt to pry apart the titles “Son of God” and “Messiah.” In the Bible these are equivalents, designating the same royal office.

There is an underlying problem with Christianity as it has been generally understood. This has to do with Jesus’ Messiahship. People have long been taught that Jesus rejected the “Jewish” expectation that the Messiah would overthrow the political power of present human government and set up a real, worldwide Kingdom. The church-going public largely imagines that Jesus expected that the Kingdom would be established only in the hearts of men and women, and not externally as a real government. This imagined meaning of Kingdom is a dangerously misleading half-truth. It is true that Jesus did not, *at his first coming*, make any attempt at all to overthrow the existing political system (John 6:15). He came to *proclaim* the Kingdom as Gospel (Luke 4:43; Mark 1:14-15) and to die for our sins. This, however, does not alter the fact that *at his second coming* he fully intended to take up the political role predicted for Messiah in the Old Testament and “Jewish” sense (Mark 14:62). Not for one moment did Jesus deny his future function as King of Israel and ruler of the world. To have claimed to be Messiah and yet to have disclaimed the right to sit on the throne of David in Jerusalem and govern the earth would have been nonsensical! It would have been to reject the Bible’s view of Messiahship, while claiming to uphold the Scriptures! The destiny of Jesus was defined by the fascinating words of the angel to Mary in Luke 1:32-33: “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.”

Jesus always looked forward to the Second Coming when he would assume his full role as King of the world (Heb. 9:28). It was not that he was not already Messiah. He was always, since his miraculous birth, Messiah, and it was the essence of the Christian faith to recognize this (Matt. 16:16-17). To make this known publicly too early in his ministry was, however, to ask for unnecessary trouble — hence the so-called “Messianic secret” (Mark 1:34). Theology departs from the New Testament when it tries to convince us that because Jesus did not in the first century take up the position of Messiah in the expected Davidic sense, he will never do so! This is simply to reject the Gospel of the Kingdom which contains a promise that the Kingdom will be inaugurated worldwide when Jesus returns. Jesus and the Apostles constantly make their appeals for repentance *on the basis of belief in the future*

*Kingdom* (Mark 1:14-15; 4:11-12; Luke 8:11-12; 9:2; Matt. 13:19; 24:14; Acts 8:12; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31). E. Earle Ellis is right when he says that “the term ‘Kingdom of God’ is used in Acts only of a future event.”<sup>1</sup>

Now the knowledge of the Kingdom of God as a vital part of the Gospel is in no sense an academic acknowledgment of a remote future event. It is the key to the believer’s involvement with Christ. Daniel 7 provides information not only about the individual Son of Man, to whom the Kingdom is granted, but also about all those who are to be associated with him in rulership. Daniel 7:18, 22 speaks of the time to come when “the saints take possession of the Kingdom.” Jesus echoes this prediction exactly when he says to believers, “Seek His Kingdom...Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father is delighted to **give** you the kingdom” (Luke 12:31-32).

Daniel 7:27 is even more explicit: “Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; their Kingdom will never end and all rulers on earth will serve and obey them” (see ERV, GNT, RSV). Let it be carefully noted, however, that no world political power is to be asserted or exercised by the saints until Jesus returns. That future event is the one for which we pray “May your Kingdom come!”

In 1 Corinthians 6:2 Paul makes an appeal to a recognized fact, a basic principle of Christianity. He seems frustrated that his people are unclear about such an elementary Christian truth (cp. 6:9, 19): “Do you not know that the saints are going to manage the world?” (see Moffatt’s translation). The remark is made in the context of settling disputes and recalls the passage in Isaiah 2:1-4 which foresees the Messiah as arbiter of international disputes. This is to be the honor and responsibility of Christians as they assist the Messiah in the future worldwide government. This will be the first truly successful world government.

In the book of “the Revelation of Jesus Christ” (Rev. 1:1) where the mind of Jesus is disclosed continuously for 22 chapters, the coming reign of the saints is a principal theme. The two elements of the Gospel — the death of Christ and the subsequent reign of the Messiah and the saints — are combined in the jubilant outburst of 5:9-10: “Worthy are you [the Lamb, Jesus] to take the book and to break its seals; for you were slain, and purchased for God with your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign on the earth.”

This central importance of the Kingdom of God and the co-rulership of the saints should put beyond doubt the need to proclaim the Kingdom as the heart of the Gospel message. The announcement of the Kingdom serves as an invitation to royal office in the coming geopolitical reign

<sup>1</sup> *New Century Bible Commentary on Luke*, p. 13.

on a renewed earth. This is both the goal of human history and the destiny of the Church. No wonder, then, that Jesus urges his Church on with the promise of the supreme reward: “He who overcomes and keeps my deeds to the end, to him I will give authority over the nations; and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces, just as I have received authority from my Father” (Rev. 2:26-27).

This is an echo of Psalm 2, of Daniel 7:27 and, of course, Luke 22:28-30: “You are those who have stood by me in my trials, and just as my Father has **covenanted** to me a kingdom, I **covenant** to you, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my Kingdom, and you will sit on thrones to administer the twelve tribes of Israel.” (“Judge” is equivalent to “administer” or “rule,” according to Hebrew usage. See, for example, Good News translation, Moffatt and the *International Critical Commentary* on 1 Cor. 6:2.) Jesus insists also in Revelation 3:21, “He who overcomes, I will grant him to sit down with me on my throne, as I also overcame and sat down with my Father on His throne.”

It is in Revelation 20 that we find the ultimate denouement of the Bible’s constant anticipation of effective divine rule on earth. Once again there is the promise of royal office for the faithful when they are resurrected to immortality: “They came to life and began to reign as kings with Messiah” (Rev. 20:4).

On the firm foundation of Jesus and his teaching — on the Kingdom Gospel *message* of Jesus, not only on the messenger — a believer is assured of a place of responsibility and royal privilege in the coming Kingdom. It remains a fundamental truth of the New Testament that the Gospel of the Kingdom was preached to Abraham (Gal. 3:8). And to Abraham was promised an inheritance of the world (Rom. 4:13). To his spiritual descendants, the international Israel of God (Gal. 6:16; Phil. 3:3) will be granted inheritance of the earth (Matt. 5:5). With the Messiah, King of Israel and Savior of the world, they will reign as kings on earth (Rev. 5:10). To that honor and service they are summoned by the Gospel of the Kingdom. In their blessing lies the power to bless others (Gen. 12:1-3).

Background to this central definition of the Christian Gospel as preached by Jesus and Paul and NT evangelists (Acts 1:3, 6; 8:12; 19:8; 20:24-25; 28:23, 31) is, of course, Psalm 37: “the humble will inherit the land” (v. 9, 11), “the inheritance of the blameless will be forever” (v. 18), “those blessed by Him will inherit the land” (v. 22), “the righteous will inherit the land and live in it forever” (v. 29), “He will exalt you to inherit the land” (v. 34).

It is time for Bible readers to abandon their customary misleading language about “going to heaven at death.” After all, why would you want to go to heaven, when Jesus will not be there! He is returning to the earth at his single future Parousia (Second Coming). Your destiny is to prepare now, with all earnestness, to gain a position as

supervisor, governor and manager with Jesus Messiah in the future Kingdom of God on a renewed earth, which is the heart of the Gospel hope.

Jeremiah 27:5 presents the stupendous truth that God, who has created the world and everything in it, proposes to give that whole world to those who are pleasing in His sight. The divine plan speaks of an amazing generosity on the part of the One God. The definition of the Kingdom, the heart of the Christian Gospel, urgently needs redefinition as “the Kingdom of the Lord in the hands of the sons of David” (2 Chron. 13:8), certainly not just a spiritual state of mind in the heart!

The world now in chaos is going to be reborn (Matt. 19:28), renewed, when Jesus returns, and you are destined to take part in that first successful world government, when the world will be under new management, that of the Messiah and the saints, holy people of all ages. No wonder then that Peter anticipates, as the outcome of the present trials and tests of believers, that the future gift of the Kingdom “will bring you much praise and glory and honor” at the future revelation of Jesus Messiah (1 Pet. 1:7, NLT). The gift of the Kingdom to Jesus and his true followers is nothing less than the heart and core of the New Covenant (see Luke 22:28-30 above). What an honor!

In view of this core Gospel truth, we should be duly disturbed and warned by the striking alert to us all supplied by Paul in 1 Timothy 6:3-4: “If anyone comes to you and does not bring the health-giving words, those of our lord Jesus Messiah...he understands nothing.” Did not John echo exactly the same dire warning? “Many deceivers have gone out into the world...Anyone who goes too far, and does not remain in the teaching of Messiah, does not have God” (2 John 7-9).

These precious verses account for the most severe and alarming warning of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount: “Many will say to me in that future day, ‘Lord, lord, did we not preach...and even do miracles in your name?’” That unfortunate group will be confronted with the chilling words, “I never recognized you” (Matt. 7:22-23). So also in Luke, the same multitude will claim that they had eaten in Jesus’ presence and he had “taught in their streets” (Luke 13:26). But the level of their deception and carelessness will have stolen their imagined success! They will be rejected from the goal of the Kingdom. Why? Simply by addressing Jesus as “lord, lord” but failing to believe and do what he said! (Luke 6:46-49).

This will cause each reader to ponder again the black and white Apostolic warnings from Paul and John, cited above. Without the teachings and Kingdom Gospel words of Jesus, we are founded on sand, and not on rock. The warnings should strike home to anyone who has embraced the very false but popular idea that the teachings given by Jesus belong in the Old Testament! That indeed would be a recipe for the failure so strongly warned against by Jesus himself. By no means relegate the gospels to the Old

Covenant! Make absolutely sure that your inherited Christian faith begins with obedience to Jesus and his Gospel (Mark 1:14-15). To do otherwise risks ultimate failure. ✧

## Satan, the Personal Devil Additional Notes on Matthew 4, Jude 9 and Demon Terminology

The Christadelphian treatment of the temptation accounts is all the more bewildering in view of the fair principles of exegesis they use elsewhere. The fact is that they arrive at Matthew 4 having decided that there cannot be a supernatural Devil. It is then impossible that he should be found there. To avoid him, they must embark on a method of interpretation which distorts the biblical text. This will be illustrated from *The Mystery of Iniquity Explained: Biblical Exposition of the Devil* by Lyman Booth (1929).<sup>2</sup>

The author lets us know at the outset the technique he proposes to employ, with his comment on Mark 1:13: “Jesus was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him.” The “wild animals,” Booth tells us, “represent the animal feelings in man’s nature” (p. 174). He then suggests as a method of interpretation that “no passage of Scripture can be interpreted partly literally and partly spiritually. If it is to be literally understood, it must be literally understood throughout; if it is to be spiritually understood, it must be spiritually understood throughout” (p. 183). However, he undermines his own good principle by admitting that Jesus was literally in the wilderness though the temptations were figurative (p. 184). (By “figurative” he presumably means that the temptations did not involve an external person.) Jesus’ appetite created an “impulse” within him (p. 185). “The self-principle, the desire principle in the Christ when he felt hungry suggested at once what was a truth, surely, seeing thou art the Son of God ‘command that these stones be made bread.’ This state of mind was the Devil that tempted Christ” (p. 187).

Booth goes on to speak of the “falsely accusing principle, figuratively represented by the Devil” (p. 189). “Hence the whole passage is merely a figurative description of the result of the mental examination of the prevalent worldly system...The Devil leaves him — that is, these states of mind cease to trouble him; he had gained the victory, and angels, i.e. messengers came and ministered unto him” (p. 190). “Hence the better view of the trials is that which regards them as mental scenes...The whole account of the trial of our Lord admits of an easy, clear and conclusive explanation when viewed

figuratively as a picture of the thoughts that passed through his mind in the survey of this great struggle” (p. 191). He then goes on to speak of the “absurdity connected with the belief in the Devil; the atheistical tendency of such a belief in a devil...If there is a God there cannot be a devil” (p. 195).

We must note that the method of interpretation proposed by Booth himself is abandoned. He admits that Jesus was literally in the wilderness and that angels came to him and ministered to him. These facts he dare not treat figuratively.

The question that must be asked is: Why should the phrase “came up to him” (Matt. 4:3) mean the onset of thoughts within him, when exactly the same phrase “came up to him” (v. 11) means a literal approach of angels? The method used by Booth is bewildering and arbitrary. In the single sentence “the Devil left him and angels came up to him” (v. 11), the first half of the sentence is taken figuratively to mean the end of temptation in the mind of Jesus, and the second half is literally true! This is in contradiction to Booth’s own principle of consistency, quoted above.

The proper and commonsense method is surely to compare the phrase “came up to him” in 4:3 with Matthew’s use of the same phrase elsewhere, and then with the use of the same words in the New Testament as a whole. (In deciphering poor handwriting, we look for other occurrences of an obscure letter to see how it fits in different contexts.) In Matthew 8:2 a leper “came up to him”; in 8:5 a centurion “came up to him”; in 8:19 a scribe “came up to him”; and in 24:3 the disciples “came up to him.” In Acts 22:27 “the commander came up to” Paul and spoke. The words in the original text in all these cases and scores of others throughout the New Testament are exactly the words used of the approach of the Satan to Jesus. In no case in the Bible are these words used of thoughts arising in the mind. This will suffice to show that the “figurative” view of “came up to him” in Matthew 4:3 has *no parallel anywhere in Scripture*. No lexicon known to me will allow a figurative meaning for the phrase in question. The theory that no one approached Jesus in the wilderness temptation is a private one, which has simply been imported by ascribing to words meanings which they cannot bear. This involves a revolution in language which if applied elsewhere will effectively overthrow every fact stated in the New Testament.

We must examine briefly the passage in Jude 9 which describes Satan in conflict with the archangel Michael. The ordinary reader has no difficulty in understanding that the archangel Michael is the archangel Michael. Not so the Christadelphians. Booth embarks on a complex explanation which is all the more misleading because of

<sup>2</sup>The source is Church of God Abrahamic Faith (Church of God General Conference) but the reasoning is also Christadelphian.

the confidence with which it is presented. To explain Jude 9, he refers us to Zechariah 3, where he says Satan is Tatnai. Tatnai (Tattenai) opposed the rebuilding of the Temple in the days of Joshua the high priest. Booth says, "Referring to this event [in Zech. 3] Jude says: 'Yet Michael, the Archangel, when contending with the Devil, he disputed about the body of Moses, and dared not bring against him a railing accusation, but said "The Lord rebuke thee.'" Here Tatnai is represented as 'the devil' because he falsely accused the Jews...The 'body of Moses' is merely the Jewish church, and the disputation regarding the body is the disputation regarding the building of the Temple for the Mosaic system of worship. Thus the passage in Jude which has been the cause of much perplexity becomes easily intelligible...As Michael, the chief messenger, did not rebuke Satan, but said 'The Lord rebuke thee,' so it was in the case of Joshua" (p. 101-102). On page 76 he states boldly, "It is evident that Michael, the chief messenger, and also the false-accuser (Satan) were individual HUMAN BEINGS" (capitals his).

A less intelligible explanation would be hard to imagine. It is evident, says Booth, that Michael, the archangel, is a *human being*. Is it evident that the angel Gabriel is a human being? It is evident to Booth that Joshua in Zechariah 3 is Michael, the archangel, in Jude 9! Booth has not noted that in Zechariah, the *Lord* said "the Lord rebuke you." In Jude, Michael the archangel uttered the same words. Will this mean then that the Lord is Michael and Joshua?! There is no good evidence for equating the two passages, much less for equating the high priest Joshua with the archangel Michael!

To propose that Michael the archangel is Joshua the high priest is unprecedented. 1 Thessalonians 4:16 provides the only other occurrence of the word "archangel," and no one suggests that he is a human being! If we consult contemporary Jewish writings (Jude himself quotes from the book of Enoch), we find a reference to the dispute over the body of Moses — which means Moses' body — in the Targum of Jonathan on Deuteronomy 34:6, and a reference in the church father, Origen, to the Ascension of Moses in which the story of a dispute over his body occurs. The event was clearly well known to Jude's readers and needed no explanation. The mention of Satan in opposition to an archangel is further proof of Satan's reality as a supernatural being, and this is confirmed beyond any doubt by Revelation 12:7 where a war occurs in heaven between Michael and his angels and Satan and his angels. To explain these passages away, in an effort to suppress the scriptural evidence for Satan as an angelic being, is strongly discouraged by Revelation 22:19 which warns us not to "take away from the words of the book of this prophecy."

Surely a method of interpretation which entails equating the archangel Michael with Joshua is self-condemned. The desperation involved in the

Christadelphian treatment of Jude 9 should point to the weakness of their whole theory about Satan.

It is customary for Christadelphians to dismiss the New Testament demon terminology as mere terms bearing no relation to the idea behind them. Thus, it is said, we talk of "lunacy" without necessarily believing in the power of the moon to produce madness. A moment's thought will reveal that the use of the word "lunacy" is in no way a parallel to the elaborate use of demon terminology in the New Testament. The New Testament records speak of demons entering and leaving their victims. They carefully differentiate between disease and demon possession (Mark 1:32; 6:13; Luke 6:18). The same outward disease may be attributed to natural causes in one case and to demon possession in another (compare Matt. 4:24 with 17:15, and 12:22 with Mark 7:32). As *Smith's Bible Dictionary* (1893) says, "Can it be supposed that [Jesus] would sanction, and the Evangelists be permitted to record forever, an idea in itself false, which has constantly been the very stronghold of superstition? Nor was the language used such as can be paralleled with mere conventional expression. There is no harm in our 'speaking of certain forms of madness as lunacy, not thereby implying that we believe the moon to have, or to have had, any influence on them...but if we begin to describe the cure of such as the moon's ceasing to afflict them, or if a physician were solemnly to address the moon, bidding it to abstain from injuring his patient, there would be here a passing over to quite a different region...There would be that gulf between our thoughts and words in which the essence of a lie consists. Now Christ does everywhere speak such language as this' (Trench, *On Miracles*)...In the face of this mass of evidence it seems difficult to conceive how the theory [of accommodation to the language of the time] can be reconciled with anything like truth of Scripture. We may fairly say that it would never have been maintained, except on the supposition that demoniacal possession was in itself a thing absolutely incredible, and against all actual experience."

In Mark 9:20 Mark deliberately writes that it was the demon who saw Jesus coming. The demon is given personality with a masculine participle: "When the spirit saw him..."

The believer in no personal Satan is invited to reread the passages of Scripture referring to Satan, the Devil, the Tempter, etc., allowing the word angel to mean angel, and "come up to" to mean what it says. It will be found that there is a united scriptural testimony to an external, evil invisible being and his demons. Ultimately the arguments used to suppress the facts about Satan will equally obscure the evidence of the true God. Both are clearly presented in Scripture. Only the prolonged holding of a traditional view to the contrary will make the scriptural doctrine of Satan difficult. The Church of God cannot afford to be uncertain on an issue as fundamental as this. ✧

## Scattered Brethren

Robin Todd's Scattered Brethren Network continues its mission to connect scattered biblical unitarians around the world for local fellowship opportunities. Currently there are over 930 of you on that network list. Unfortunately, some of you who signed up have since changed your email address, without notifying Robin of the change. Please email him at [robinsings4u@comcast.net](mailto:robinsings4u@comcast.net) to update your email address. Also, there is now a Scattered Brethren Network Facebook page for you to "Like."

## Comments

"I changed my mind about the Trinity about 2 years ago at a local house-church congregation where I was challenged about that topic as well as many others. Since then, I've come across Buzzard, Gill, Tuggy and a few others in my search for resources and other commentary. I've begun leading a Bible study in my home with my Trinitarian friends and church family. With the exception of my dad, I personally know only a handful of others who are not trinitarians. I hope this resource will help me in my quest to lead studies in my home that go back to what the biblical authors and Christ himself originally intended to make known to us on a variety of topics. To Sir Anthony, I so deeply appreciate the help and guidance that you and others have offered to those who are seeking to work through all the tradition we've been handed and get back to the truth." — *Tennessee*

"I have been sold on the fact that in John 1:2,3,4 it should be translated 'this' or 'it' instead of the popular 'he' or 'him.' I have been trying to convince people in my Bible study group. I have shown them the 8 English Bible versions before the KJV and I'm waiting for a response. I have shown them John 6:60b where the same Greek word is used and translated 'this' or 'it.' I obviously believe and am convinced that Jesus absolutely did not pre-exist himself and that he started in the womb of Mary." — *Australia*

"I am glad that I know you and your work. We had some communication before over 20 years ago when in a period of 3-4 years I had accepted the truths you preach (One God, state of the dead, Kingdom of God), but afterwards I recanted and returned to evangelicalism. Now after so many years I have returned after study and prayer in these truths again, but with more spiritual maturity. I would like to translate some of your articles into Greek." — *Greece*

"I am an ex Jehovah's Witness and I am now a born again follower of Christ, not men. I was a third generation JW and it took me 30 years to shake that religion off. I love all of your work. It's nice to find accurate truth still." — *California*

"I've been reading your books and watching your YouTube videos and I have to say you make a pretty good

point: Jesus is the Son and Yahweh is God. I don't know any unitarians here in Zimbabwe except the JW's, but the fact that they say Michael is Jesus doesn't settle well with me. I pray I find a church soon. I go to a Bible college here and my hope is to be a pastor and a lecturer with God's grace." — *Zimbabwe*

"I have come across your YouTube channel and I really like your message and your perspective on everything. There are so many false teachings, traditions of men, ungodly doctrines and a false paganized Christianity that most people in today's world believe in. I believe we must go back to the basics. What was Jesus message, why he did what he did, who is God, who is Jesus, etc. Nothing else matters to me besides the truth and salvation and even though I know a little bit that I've done some research about, I actually have never read the Bible once through and now I really want to read the Bible many, many times over to have the best possible understanding of Jesus' message." — *Australia*

"I live in the British Virgin Islands, which is in the Caribbean. I have been watching your videos on YouTube and they have transformed my understanding of the word of God. I used to believe in the Trinity, but your teaching has helped me to understand that there is only one God, the Father, who has a begotten Son, the man Christ (the Messiah) Jesus. Thank you for sharing your knowledge with us via YouTube. I pray that God will sustain you for many more years so that we can learn much more." — *British Virgin Islands*

"I am writing this email out of thanks because with your book, a debate (with another brother against Michael Brown and James White) and other articles and lectures, you have helped me to find the one God, our Father, and to leave the Trinity behind. Others who have helped are Dale Tuggy, Sean Finnegan, and Aleksandar Vuksanovic, to name a few. Above all, of course, is God's infallible word and guidance through His Spirit." — *Germany*

"Like many I believed the orthodox version of the Christian faith. Although it never set well with me, after six years of constant study I found a booklet entitled *Who Is Jesus?* This small booklet confirmed all my suspicions. Jesus isn't God – Adonai, there's no Trinity, etc. Striking gold, I went on the hunt armed with some actual proof. Then I found the book *They Never Told Me This in Church!* by Greg Deuble. What! The faith of our lord the Messiah according to Scripture is the Gospel of the Kingdom of God which will fulfill the promises made to our fathers. There are no souls (people) in heaven today, because the resurrection has not yet happened. These future promises consist of one land and one throne." — *North Carolina*

**Please check out our new website!**  
**[Jesuskingdomgospel.com](http://Jesuskingdomgospel.com)**