

# Focus on the Kingdom

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Anthony Buzzard, editor

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## Is “Obedience” a Dirty Word?

by Kenneth LaPrade, Texas

“One who heeds instruction is on the path to life; one who rejects reproof goes astray” (Prov. 10:17).

“And why do you call out to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say? Everyone coming to me [Jesus] and hearing my words and doing them, I will show you whom he is like. He is like a man building a home, who dug and delved and laid a foundation upon the rock; and a flood came and the river broke upon that home and could not shake it, because it was well built. But the one hearing and not doing is like a man who built his home atop the earth, without a foundation, upon which the river broke and immediately it collapsed, and the ruin of that home was a great one” (Luke 6:46-49, *The New Testament: A Translation*, by David Bentley Hart).

If we use it honestly, what we commonly call “hindsight” can involve a fascinating dimension in life. Nevertheless, if one’s only insights are routine exercises in self-justification for past attitudes and decisions, no authentic learning really takes place in our lives. But if one can receive true **correction** for old, erroneous thinking patterns, however difficult, a world of renewal becomes a distinct possibility. It is a marvelous reality to have solid assurance about certain promises from God, but it is an insidious trap to have blustery confidence rooted in fallible experiences and manmade doctrines!

I have noticed the blatant neglect by various Christian authors in pointing out the urgent value of *obeying the words of Jesus!* Popular writers sometimes seem to imply that one can come into “a relationship with Jesus Christ” merely by being excited by his redemptive accomplishments, whether obeying him or not. Some folks seem to actually fear that they will be perceived as *not* preaching “salvation by grace” if they mention obedience as an authentic requirement. I certainly sympathize with their plight, since I, myself, was snared by dubious concepts about “grace” for well over thirty years! Nevertheless, such utter **reluctance** to emphasize *obedience* is totally foreign to the overall flow of Scriptures!

“In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to Him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. And being made

perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him” (Hebrews 5:7-9, ESV).

Just as Jesus, the fully human Messiah, needed to reverently *learn obedience* to be made perfect, we believers, in turn, must **obey Jesus** to acquire salvation in the age to come.

“Through him [Jesus] we have received grace and apostleship to bring about believing obedience among all the nations for the sake of his name...Far be it from me [Paul], you see, to speak about anything except what the Messiah has accomplished through me for the obedience of the nations, in word and deed” (Romans 1:5; 15:18, Kingdom New Testament, N.T. Wright).

“Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel, the proclamation of Jesus the Messiah, in accordance with the unveiling of the mystery kept hidden for long ages but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings, according to the command of the eternal God, for the obedience of faith among all the nations” (Romans 16:25-26, KNT).

“For God did not send His Son into the world for the purpose of condemning the world, but so that the world might be rescued through him. The person who believes in him is not condemned. But the one who does not believe has been condemned already, because he has not believed in the revelation and whole agenda of God’s uniquely begotten Son. This is the reason for condemnation: the light has come into the world and human beings loved darkness rather than light, because their activities were wicked. Every person who does wicked things hates the light and will not come to the light, so that his works will not be exposed. But the one who performs truth comes to the light, so that his works might be demonstrated as performed under God’s direction” (John 3:17-21, OGF).

Very clearly, the one who “performs truth,” actually doing things “under God’s direction,” is **obedient** to Jesus’ precise words of light and life.

The discipline of **obedience** is meant to challenge us and help us grow in a healthy, encouraging way; God’s fatherly call to **obey** was never meant as a pointless drill, meting out the harshness of meaningless, undoable tasks. The Scriptures clearly lay out God’s wise intentions in using godly, loving discipline to guide our lives. The book of Hebrews paints a vivid picture:

“For the joy set before him [Jesus] he endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who has endured such hostility from sinners against himself,

so that you do not grow weary and give up. You have not yet resisted to the point of bloodshed in your striving against sin, and you have forgotten the exhortation addressed to you as children: *‘My child; do not take lightly the LORD’s discipline, or give up when you are corrected by Him, because those whom the LORD loves He disciplines, and He chastises every child He accepts’* (Prov. 3:11, 12).

“It is for discipline that you endure. God is dealing with you as with children, for what child is there whom his father does not discipline? But if you do not experience discipline, which all children share in, then you are illegitimate and not true children. Besides, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits, and receive life? For they disciplined us for a short time, as seemed good to them; but He disciplines us for our benefit, so that we may share His holiness. All discipline at the time seems not joyful but sorrowful, yet afterward it produces the peaceful fruit of righteousness for those trained by it.

“So strengthen your weak hands and your feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather healed. Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, because without it no one will see the Lord. Take care that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springs up and causes trouble, and many are defiled by it” (Heb. 12:2b-15).

It is certain that God, as the heavenly Father, has our **best interests at heart** when He simply commands obedience. It is equally valid that Jesus, the perfect representative of the Father, commanded true, authoritative dictates which he learned from his Father and spoke precisely on God’s behalf (John 12:44-50). He, also, has **always** had our best interests at heart, loving us perfectly with a practical love which we are to imitate (John 13:34-35).

One could easily peruse dozens of new covenant Scriptural passages (in their contexts) to see that it is vital that we continually **abide in Jesus** by **keeping his commandments** and **bearing much fruit** and, thus, **becoming his disciples**. Adherence to Jesus’ commands is how God’s love is truly demonstrated in our lives! Refusal to continue abiding in him and his love means being thrown away to wither (John 15:1-17). The supreme truth that by grace we *have been saved* (initially) through a repentant response of faith to the Kingdom gospel — as a **gift**, and not by our own efforts (or “works”), so that we may not boast — does **not mean** that the “good works” for which God “created” us and prepared us are merely optional — or not even required (Eph. 2:8-10). Once again, we **must** proactively keep Jesus’ commands so as to fruitfully abide in him!

I know how strongly that folks (like me) have been indoctrinated in past years into thinking that “salvation

by faith or by grace” means flowing along an effortless type of *cruise-control*! Nevertheless, the word “**faith**” (Greek *pistis*) in the Bible never means “lying back” on our supposed laurels while *doing nothing* — except to **accept** gracious things being done for us! James 2:14-26 wisely emphasizes how **faith without works** (meaning the appropriate, corresponding, obedient actions) is dead! **Faith**, by and large, means continued **faithfulness**! As we keep abiding “in the **faith**” (or in **faithful, obedient** actions) we bear fruit that honors our Father God. As we humbly walk this way, we are invited to experience great confidence as we pray (1 John 5:13-15). Being faithful “doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves” keeps us from being neglectful, useless, and fruitless (James 1:22-26; 2 Pet. 1:2-11).

By understanding that **faith** really indicates **faithfulness**, we avoid the slick, erroneous, traditional interpretations of phrases about being saved by faith and not by “works of the law.” Such a biblical contrast *is not* a distinction between “works” as “doing stuff” (in general) and **faith** (as mere mental acceptance.) This scenario does not remotely imply that “doing nothing” trumps “doing stuff.” What is concisely emphasized is a stark contrast between the “works of the Law,” being the old covenantal identity markers of Torah adherence — like food restrictions, calendar observances, and obligatory circumcision (Col. 2:16-17; Gal. 5:2-3; 6:15-16) — and the loving, obedient walk of **faithfulness** to the Messiah, which simply means walking according to New Covenant norms.

Of course, the whole New Covenant picture is rooted in “repentance” (having a real change of heart and practical life direction) as the response to Jesus’ Gospel of the coming Kingdom of God (Mark 1:1, 14-15). As is clear from the parable of the sower, a continued, faithful response is absolutely required (Matt. 13:18-23). Jesus himself was **not** a relic of a previous “dispensation,” who merely polished off old covenant norms (old standards, which he consistently challenged in bold ways.) He was the primary herald of our **great salvation** (Heb. 2:1-3) — the **new covenant** truths which must be embraced by following Jesus’ very own teachings (as recorded in the four gospels).

Before concluding, it might be helpful to point out a couple of areas which **do not** reflect what is meant by obedience to Jesus. Zealously following manmade religious traditions (so abundant in modern times) may give an appearance of sincere piety and devotion, but they are of no true value before Jesus and his Father. Harsh, legalistic demands of jumping through unreasonable or dubious human-devised hoops is **not** the picture of new covenant obedience. We must be wary of the long-standing, coercive forces behind certain dominant influences (like Trinitarianism) which sadly masquerade as bona fide Christianity (Matt. 15:1-9). While being kind and respectful to others, we must be as

keenly discerning as Jesus taught us to be about assessing what is behind the activities of seemingly convincing imposters (Matt. 7:13-20).

Along with this concern, (as already briefly noted) the misapplied imposition of old covenant standards on new covenant people must be firmly avoided (such as strict Sabbath-keeping, etc.)

If you have been sincerely religious but have lacked a background in solid Kingdom priorities and the essential nature of obeying Jesus, I recommend that you not be discouraged! God is supremely merciful to our possible old ruts of distorted thinking, such as the “once saved always saved” mindset. It is not too late to exhibit the courage to admit to having been badly wrong — and then to take the time to confess sins of sloppiness and blindness toward God (1 John 1:5-2:2).

Honestly applied “hindsight,” instead of misguided pride to defend one’s previous errors, can be so liberating! We **can** choose to get on track with a godly, repentant response to Jesus’ Kingdom calling, and we **can stay on track** (through God’s bountifully merciful interventions) and continue bearing the genuine fruit of lovingly heeding Jesus’ words.

“For the grace of God has appeared with salvation for all people, teaching us to reject godlessness and worldly desires and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, while we wait expectantly for the blessed hope — the appearing of the glory of our great God and of our Savior, Jesus the Messiah. He gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people of his own, who are eager to do what is good” (Titus 2:11-14). ✧

## Notes on the Origin of Jesus

by Terry Robinson, Arkansas

**Matthew 1:18** in many translations has the Greek word *genesis* translated as “birth”: “The **birth** of Jesus the Messiah was as follows...” This is not, however, the primary definition. *Thayer’s Greek Lexicon* has the primary definition of *genesis* as “origin” or “source.” Just as the word “Genesis,” naming the first book of the Bible, means origin, source, or beginning — this is the same word! One would think Matthew 1:18 and 20 would settle it, since Jesus is there shown to have *originated* in Mary’s womb.

But the translators showed their bias. Why? Just look at the translation committees. The KJV translators were all of the Anglican/Church of England denomination. Would the head of their church, King James himself, have been happy if they had translated honestly against his position? What about the NIV? Its translators were either Trinitarians or Oneness Pentecostals — all espousing the doctrine that Jesus is God Almighty Himself. And so it goes, for all the popular English translations since the earliest ones.

One might also think that the genealogies in Matthew and Luke, all showing Jesus to be a *descendant* of David, would have made it clear that Jesus had ancestors/predecessors. But the meaning of “descendant” and “ancestor” seems to have been abandoned.

### John 6

Jesus said that his *flesh* was from heaven, did he not? John 6:33: “For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world.” And verses 48-51: “I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and **the bread** also which I will give for the life of the world **is my flesh**.” For anyone who believes that Jesus literally existed prior to his miraculous conception in the womb of Mary: Do you really believe Jesus existed with *flesh* in heaven prior to his conception in the womb of Mary? The verses in John chapter six, *if taken literally*, mean exactly that. Or could Jesus be using figures of speech that are sometimes difficult to understand? Look at how James uses “come down” in 1:17 and 3:15-17.

### John 1

Concerning the pronouns sometimes translated “he” and “him” in reference to “the word” in John chapter 1: The word of God is His word as my word is my word. The “word” is an “it” in some translations, *including 8 translations prior to the KJV in 1611*. Grammatical gender has nothing to do with sexual gender. The same words translated “he” and “him” can also be translated “it” when referring to inanimate objects. Translators determine based on the noun to which the pronoun refers. Elsewhere in Scripture, the same pronoun is translated “it” when referring to the words of a man, etc.

It is similar to the Spanish word “sombbrero” for a type of hat. Though masculine, *grammatically*, the word refers to an inanimate object. So a “word” is not a person just as a “sombbrero” is not a person.

So the word of God is not a “he,” if translated correctly. The translation “he” is the problem. That was not the case in all translations, and it is certainly not demanded by the Greek. In the same way, “life” and “light” are not persons, though personified like “wisdom” in Proverbs chapter 8. The word of God became the man Jesus. This does not mean that Jesus was before his birth literally the word of God. But Jesus is to us God’s word in that he is at the core of the Gospel of salvation in the coming Kingdom.

**Luke 1:35**: “The angel answered her, ‘Holy spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and **precisely for that reason** the holy child will be called the Son of God.’” Why does the angel

say “for that reason” IF he was the Son of God prior to being begotten in Mary? Luke did not contradict himself.

When someone says Jesus was begotten in heaven, I ask, What do you mean, “born of God in heaven”? Would you put that phrase in other words, to define it? Do you mean that “God gave birth in heaven”? Luke describes an event on earth!

Happy studying. Persistent truth seekers, with the right heart, will find. God will help them. ✧

## A Twisted Paul and Rejected Jesus

From the Recent Online Theological Conference

**M**y thesis today is that we are surrounded by a dangerous tendency to believe in and promote a **twisted Paul and rejected Jesus**.

My appeal is that unitarian believers take time to verify that they have not drifted away from their own heritage. This can easily happen when powerful new movements, even unitarian ones, arise and exercise their persuasive power. I believe that the unitarian people in the 1850's put their fingers on a fundamental flaw in popular versions of Christianity. The passage of time can almost inevitably lessen the clarity of that original Abrahamic discovery. We are all easily prone not to think critically, but just to go along with the status quo. To summarize: we are faced with a potential rejection of Jesus and a twisting of Paul.

Let me show you this by quoting a famous Dispensationalist and then citing a number of oddly neglected verses which if preached and emphasized could eliminate the Dispensationalist error and restore the truth. It is only by having a passion for TRUTH that we can hope to be saved (2 Thess. 2:10).

First we need to reestablish clarity on this point about **covenant**: The all-important covenant made with Abraham is **different from** the later covenant made with Moses. The covenant with Moses is not the same as the covenant made with Abraham and certainly not the covenant made by Jesus.

To show this, I remind you of **Deuteronomy 5:2-3**: This verse established clearly that the Mosaic “covenant made at Sinai/Horeb was **not** made with our fathers.” Our faith must therefore have as its foundation the promises **made to father Abraham**, not the covenant made with Moses. True Christianity means having “the faith of Abraham” (Rom. 4:16) which is also “the faith of Jesus,”<sup>1</sup> not just “faith in Jesus” which is too vague a definition.

My point is a simple one. The Gospel, preached by Jesus, has been “guttled” of its major component, and has

been replaced by a half-Gospel. The **first** element in the Gospel, the Kingdom, has been put out of sight. The Gospel as Jesus and Paul preached it does not just offer us forgiveness of sin, huge as that is, but forgiveness so that we may then go on to regain the status lost in Adam and find our true Destiny.

We are saved, not just to be **forgiven**, but in view of the great, overarching Bible purpose as described in **Jeremiah 27:5**. This is one of the grandest accounts of the Gospel. God wants to **give us the** whole world as our inheritance: “As I have made the earth by My great power and by My outstretched arm, I can give it to whomever I see fit.”

Jesus echoed this with his: “Fear not, little flock; it is your Father’s good pleasure and desire to **give you** the Kingdom” (Luke 12:32). This is exactly repeated in **Romans 4:13**, which reads, “The promise to **Abraham and to his seed [is] that he would have the world as his inheritance.**” Christians are defined by Paul as the “seed of Abraham” (Gal. 3:29).

I remind you of these words from an Archbishop of Canterbury about the astonishing absence of the Gospel of the Kingdom during all of church history. Absence of the Gospel means absence of Jesus and thus absence of Christianity! The Archbishop wrote, and please allow for his tendency to British understatement!

“Every generation finds something in the Gospel which is of special importance to itself and seems to have been overlooked in the previous age or (sometimes) in all previous ages of the Church. The great discovery of the age in which we live is the immense prominence given in the Gospel to the Kingdom of God. To us it is quite extraordinary that it figures so little in the theology and religious writings of almost the entire period of Christian history. Certainly in the Synoptic Gospels [Matthew, Mark and Luke] it has a prominence that could hardly be increased.”<sup>2</sup>

All of you are probably quite convinced that the Gospel of the Kingdom was the heart of Jesus’ business. To test yourself on that point: is anyone in our audience doubtful about **Luke 4:43**? That’s the verse which supplies and provides Jesus’ own mission statement. You would think that this ought to be basic for all believers, a grand John 3:16. But it is not. Tracts and books on salvation simply omit Luke 4:43! Rick Warren’s *Purpose Driven Church* does not even mention it!

Likewise, if you happen to have been touched by the theology of so-called Dispensationalism, you will have been taught that the Gospel of the Kingdom is *not* the Gospel for you today. I quote as one example the 21<sup>st</sup> chapter of Clarence Larkin’s book, his commentary on Daniel.

<sup>1</sup> Faith of Jesus: Rom. 3:22, 26; Gal. 2:16, 20; 3:22; Eph. 1:15; 3:12; Phil. 3:9; Col. 1:4; 2:5; James 2:1; Philem. 5; Rev. 2:13; 14:12; 19:10.

<sup>2</sup> William Temple, *Personal Religion and the Life of Fellowship*, 1926, p. 69.

He rightly states that the Gospel of the Kingdom was preached by Jesus and the Apostles, but this, Larkin maintains, was only to Jews, and when the Jews generally refused it, **that Gospel of the Kingdom ceased**, and it was replaced by what Larkin calls “the Gospel of the grace of God”! This is an astonishing systematic error, calculated I think to invite the chilling words of Jesus, when he said that only those who hear and do what he says can hope to qualify for the Kingdom and salvation (Luke 6:46). Here are the complete words of Larkin on the Gospel:

“The word ‘Gospel’ means ‘Good News.’ The ‘Gospel of the Kingdom’ is the ‘Good News’ that God is going to set up a Kingdom of the earth over which David’s son, Jesus, shall reign (Luke 1:32, 33). This Gospel was proclaimed by John the Baptist and Jesus and his disciples, in the words, ‘Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.’ The call to repent was not to individuals but to the nation. The nation refused, rejected the King and crucified him. But before the King’s death ‘the Gospel of the Kingdom’ which up to that time had been preached only in Palestine, and not to all the world, **was withdrawn**. It is to be preached again after the Church has been ‘caught out,’ and then not only in Palestine but in the whole world. And it is a call to Israel as a nation to repent, and a proclamation that Christ is coming to set up the ‘stone’ (Dan. 2:34-35, 44-45) or Millennial Kingdom...

“Between the two preachings of the ‘Gospel of the Kingdom,’ we have the preaching of the ‘Gospel of the Grace of God.’ It is the proclamation of salvation through faith in the ‘Atoning Sacrifice’ of Christ on the cross.”<sup>3</sup>

I remind you of Jesus’ words: “Multitudes will say to me on that future day, ‘Lord, lord, look what we did by way of preaching for you and even doing miracles for you.’” Jesus’ response is simply that they had not laid the foundation of sound teaching by making his Kingdom gospel the heart and center of everything preached. Jesus was warning about Christian failure, in the context of his call that we are to “beware of false prophets” (Matt. 7:15, 21-23).

### In Favor of Beautiful Truth

I was thrilled recently to find the *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges* stating on Hebrews 2 that “**Jesus was the first preacher of his own Gospel (Mark 1:14)**.”

That is superbly true. But the Billy Graham system insists that “Jesus came to do three days’ work: To die, to be buried and to rise from death.” That definition eliminates a major neglected text which I argue can bring us all back on track. That is **Mark 1:1**, which brilliantly states that the subject of Mark’s writing is “The

beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ.” Not the middle, not the end, not one part of it — but the **beginning** of the Gospel as Jesus preached it.

The definition of the Gospel is then provided in **Mark 1:14-15**. The Gospel is called “God’s Gospel,” uniting it to eight other occurrences across the NT of that same phrase,<sup>4</sup> “God’s Gospel” (the Gospel of God) providing the most essential indispensable foundation for Christianity. It is God’s Gospel **about the Kingdom**.

When we speak of the Gospel to our friends there is no better place to begin than Mark 1:1. But you will not find this passage in any tract offering salvation. Nor astonishingly will you find **Acts 20:24 and the following verse 25**, which provides a marvelous definition of what Paul preached as the Gospel. I remind you that in Acts 20:24 Paul summarized his whole Christian preaching career by saying that he had “preached the gospel of the grace of God.” Ask your friends politely what the next verse says. I don’t think they will know. Verse 25, which is carefully avoided in evangelical literature, defines what is meant by that Gospel of grace. Paul defines that Gospel of grace as his own preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom. Paul sounds just like Jesus! And sanity is restored to the whole NT Gospel — it is about the Kingdom!

Jesus and Paul have to be reconnected! I suggest that there is a concerted effort in much of evangelicalism to keep that simple fatal detachment of Jesus and Paul out of sight.

I think it is time for us to remind ourselves that the Jesus story is the story of the whole Bible and it is a Jewish story. The very first thing said about Jesus is that “the Lord will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Israel, and his Kingdom will be endless” (Luke 1:32-33). Jesus will inherit “the sure mercies of David” (Isa. 55:3: “covenantal promises,” NET). And this is the New Covenant.

I certainly could not have known any of this in the first 20 years of my Church of England experience. (I am not lying: I was there.) The Kingdom of God is the heart and center of the New, not the Old Mosaic Covenant. In **Jeremiah 33:20-21**, God made His point with ultimate emphasis. “If you can alter My covenant with day and night you can alter My covenant with David, so that he will never cease to have a king ruling on his throne.” That is the Gospel, too. If you lose that you lose the Gospel and Christianity.

If we are not teaching with complete clarity the fact that the New Covenant is the covenant about the Kingdom of God, we are missing out on very much. Thus in **Luke 22:29** Jesus stated that he was **covenanting**, not just giving, his disciples a Kingdom just as God had

<sup>3</sup> Rev. Clarence Larkin, author of the “Great Book” on “dispensational truth.” *The Book of Daniel*, 1929, p. 261.

<sup>4</sup> God’s Gospel: Mark 1:14; Rom. 1:1; 15:16; 2 Cor. 11:7; 1 Thess. 2:2, 8, 9; 1 Tim. 1:11; 1 Pet. 4:17.

“covenanted a kingdom” to him as Messiah. To say then that this Kingdom covenant belongs in the **Old Testament** is a way of cancelling Jesus, something we must never risk doing.

Here is what has happened: Evangelicalism has rightly stressed that the death of Jesus results in our being forgiven for our sins. But the Gospel did **not begin** with that fact. The great fact which is so desperately missing from popular preaching is that Jesus’ and God’s intention is **to give** us the kingdom. “Fear not, little flock, your Father is delighted to give you the kingdom,” and that Kingdom was defined with clarity to Abraham: “The promise was to Abraham and his descendants [who are us!] that he would be heir of the entire world” — not the universe, but the world as created for man. It was precisely this which we remember Adam lost, and it is precisely this which Jesus, as the second Adam, made it his business to restore.

The amazing treatise on Christianity which we call the book of Hebrews warned that we must never lose our grip on “so great a **salvation**, which had its **beginning** in the words of Jesus” (Heb. 2:3). Hebrews 1:1-2 teaches us that God **spoke** in various ways through the prophets, and finally **spoke** in His Son Jesus. The first element in the Gospel is “Jesus *spoke*,” not “Jesus *died*.” Tell your friends! ✧

## Why I Became a Pro-Life Activist by Barbara Buzzard

I came to this in increments. I first remember being shattered by reading what actually occurred in deciding *Roe v. Wade* (*Compelling Interest: The Real Story Behind Roe v. Wade*). Such carelessness, laxness, shallow thinking, stupidity, and failure to recognize pure evil led to this life-ending Supreme Court decision. In listening to the audio of the trial I was stunned by what was admitted: there would no case if it could be shown that the unborn were human!

Then I went on to read Dr. Bernard Nathanson’s testimony of having run the largest abortion clinic in the U.S. until he became convinced that he was involved in a demonic procedure. He repented bitterly and went on to write *The Hand of God: A Journey from Death to Life by the Abortion Doctor Who Changed His Mind*. He also wrote *Aborting America* and produced the film *The Silent Scream*. One of Nathanson’s biggest strengths is his revelation of the utter and complete deception involved. Abortion is built on lies. Lies frame it; lies support it; lies protect it. And as Christians I believe we have the responsibility of recognizing lies — and then reacting to them. And just as God’s marvelous forgiveness has covered Nathanson’s sins, so too with anyone who has had an abortion or been involved with it.

I continued my reading and became more and more stunned. I learned so much — and I have never been able to unlearn it. Once you know, you know! That is why I fail to understand the church’s silence (for the most part). Aren’t the ones who *know* just as guilty as the ones who *practice* such evil deeds? How can any church even *be* a church without standing against this slaughter? It’s sordid and grotesque and depraved. It’s an assault on every moral tenet known to man.

I believe any assent to abortion (and isn’t silence assent?) deforms us as a people and as a nation. My reading (and by then I was writing) continued with several books by Randy Alcorn, which were invaluable. He’s a great writer; no pastor or individual hoping to be able to help others should be without his book *Pro-Life Answers to Pro-Choice Arguments*.

And yes, I have been “warned” not to get involved in this fight as it isn’t “nice.” But I am compelled by Isaiah 1:17 and so many other similar Scriptures: “Learn to do good. Seek justice. Help the oppressed. Defend the orphan.” And yes, this is heavy and it is hard to know the depths of the evil, but it is better than ignorance. Ignorance has functioned as a curse in this matter. Apathy is even worse. And to close one’s eyes is dangerous in that it can lead to a hardening of the heart.

Let me be radical and say that you have no idea what this abortion business is about until you have read *The Abortion Holocaust* by William Brennan. Which is to say that we are living — now, today — through a holocaust. I don’t think the “we didn’t know” excuse will be valid on Judgment Day. Ben Shapiro, Ray Comfort, Matt Walsh and others have been excellent resources for me and wonderfully passionate examples of what we should all be.

And now that America is finally waking up to what is happening — infanticide — perhaps the tide will turn. It has been agonizingly slow. I have so many questions: How could good people display such apathy? Do we not even recognize what murder is? What has happened to the consciences of abortion workers and doctors? Have we been silenced and swallowed up by the unbelievably evil lies regarding “choice”? (“Choice” is used as a euphemism to mean somebody dies.)

We must start by telling ourselves the truth. And the truth is that as this despicable picture unravels it reveals the fact that abortionists not only leave newborn babies to die, but that they also have — as a procedure — snipped the necks of babies to kill them. As one abortionist was heard to say, she would break the neck of a baby born alive.

I am afraid we have come to this in part because of simply not standing in protest, closing our eyes and allowing this savagery under the guise of “women’s rights.” Doesn’t this inhumane behavior demand protest? How could we not stand against this? I thought that Scripture encourages us to tell our neighbors the truth.

And so — my short answer to how I became involved in this would be: How could I not? It is hard to write this without sounding preachy. And the truth is that I want you all to become as passionate as I am.

It's all so simple really. Unborn children are persons just like you and me and that is why it is wrong to kill them. May God help us! ✧

See our "Pro-Life Panel" online June 4 (8 p.m. EST) at [youtube.com/focusonthekingdom](https://youtube.com/focusonthekingdom)

## Comments

• "I came across your resources on YouTube while doing some research on the topic of the Trinity when it came up in a discussion in the pastoral internship program I have been in for the last 3 months. I was a Trinitarian when I joined the program, but had already abandoned the idea of the eternal Sonship of Christ based on John 1:1-18, but still believed in the dual-nature of Christ, and His one-to-one deity with the Father and the Spirit in the Trinitarian sense. My opinion on the eternal Sonship of Christ, which was fundamentally different from that of the people here, was what sparked controversy, and I, by God's guidance I believe, decided to do some study, which brought me into contact with your resources. I did what I believe was an honest assessment of the facts, probably for the first time, since all the 'truths' I formerly held on to were merely assumptions I had grown up believing. There was always something off with the idea, but I couldn't quite put a good definition or concept to it. The one true God of the Bible makes more sense to me now, and I understand the relation of the Spirit and the Son to this one true God; in short, all my confusion is lifted, and the Bible has become much more accessible to me. Unfortunately, due to my radical new belief with regards to the Trinity especially, among other peripheral subjects, my internship program here was prematurely cut short. I have been termed 'too controversial' and even 'heretical' because of my bold departure from orthodoxy with regard to the Trinity. I was tempted to compromise at some point in order to retain my position here, but felt convicted to stand up for what I believe is the truth, no matter the consequences. I am in the process of prayerfully figuring out what the next step will be. I covet the prayers of you and your team with this. I have no doubts whatsoever that God is going to work something glorious from all this. If finding this gem of a truth is the sole reason why God brought me to this place and, therefore, into contact with you in this way, then it was more than worth it! I hope to do the kind of thing you do someday soon here in Kenya, probably become a unitarian apologist in some way during the course of my ministry 'career' so that I can help the many disillusioned Christians here find the same truth I so joyfully found. I

sincerely hope this encourages my unitarian minority and persecuted friends out there. The revolution is gathering momentum; may God bring it home in His own way and at His own time when the dust settles." — *Kenya*

• "I'm currently working on a website with the purpose of spreading the biblical Unitarian message, in Sweden, Scandinavia, and elsewhere, primarily with subjects directly connected to the overarching subject of the Father as the one true God, and a range of sub-themes, entailing biblical unitarian Christology, sin, the atonement, death and resurrection, the second coming of Christ, the coming age with Christ's reign on earth. We're offering online courses, e-books, live events, articles, debates/conversations, community, and so on, in Swedish and in English. There are a growing number in the Nordic countries that are giving up on the Trinity. And I feel now is the time for me to do something more concrete." — *Sweden*

• "It has been more than a year since I contacted you. At that time I was grateful to you for your kind permission to publish a Korean version of your 'Who is Jesus?' I have given several copies and pdf files of 'Who is Jesus?' (Korean translation) to my Christian friends and relatives who are Trinitarians. Almost all of them are unwilling to change their long-cherished Trinitarian view, but one of them converted to unitarianism. I have read your 'What happens When We Die?' and I am translating it into Korean. I am convinced that this booklet will surely help Koreans to acknowledge their misunderstanding of the afterlife, or belief in the conscious disembodied soul in intermediate state after death. Almost every Sunday (Monday in Korean time), I am listening to your Youtube channel sermons/lectures, which is the same as church attendance for me, for I do not belong to any denomination. As a matter of fact, I failed to find a unitarian church in Korea except Jehovah's Witnesses and Christadelphians." — *Korea*

• "I so completely enjoyed today's Bible study online. I have been an avid pupil for approximately two years. Just when I was so discouraged that my husband and I were alone in our walk (after many years of going in and out of various denominations), God brought Focus on the Kingdom into our lives. May He be praised!" — *Alabama*

• "I am your fellow biblical unitarian believer and bi-vocational pastor from Slovak Republic. Thank you for all your hard work for the kingdom of God and Christ. I continue to received much profit from your labors." — *Slovakia*

• "Praise God I was privileged to view online most of the presenters from the 30th annual Theological Conference! God has a plan to fix the chaos of today's world! That's exciting! We will be heirs with the Messiah Jesus in the new world. Praying His Kingdom come so that His will be done on earth as it is in heaven." — *Florida*