

Focus on the Kingdom

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Anthony Buzzard, editor

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Acts: A Gold Mine of Kingdom Treasures!

by Kenneth LaPrade, Texas

Many folks might be motivated to ask a person like me, “Why even bother emphasizing *the Gospel of the Kingdom of God* repeatedly? After all, we (as Christians) already believe that Jesus died for our sins and was resurrected. Isn’t that the whole Gospel? So what then is the big deal about the Kingdom?”

Just over 50 years ago, at a memorable event in 1972 where Billy Graham preached, I embraced what I assumed to have been the *full* gospel message when I believed a teaching about John 3:16, accepting basic truths about Jesus’ sacrificial *death* and his subsequent *resurrection*. Shortly thereafter, I found myself closely linked to a group of “dispensationalists” who heartily believed that Jesus died for us and was raised from the dead, but also asserted that Jesus’ actual teachings (in the four gospels) were exclusively relevant only to Jews living before the day of Pentecost. Hence, according to our old group’s theology, Jesus’ teachings did not really apply directly to Christians. We were in the general boat, so to speak, of believing, according to a C.S. Lewis quote, “The Gospel is not in the gospels,” and, also, according to Billy Graham, “Jesus Christ came to do three days’ work” (referring to his death, burial, and resurrection). For some three decades I then confidently proclaimed this *nutshell* of Jesus’ atoning **death and resurrection**, as if it were the *whole* gospel message. Sadly, I was badly mistaken!

In the context of emphasizing Scriptural fulfillment through Jesus’ **death and resurrection**, Paul mentioned these two realities as being “**among** matters of first importance” (1 Cor. 15:3). Thus he did not state or imply that these two events constitute the *whole* Gospel message! The same context (the whole of chapter 15) includes bold Kingdom facts which indicate that the Christian dead *must be raised* in the future when God’s Kingdom will arrive: verses 15-19, 22-25, 50-58. In the even wider Scriptural context (which includes the four gospels), one can clearly see how future Kingdom of God (Kingdom of heaven) announcements **permeate** a time *before* the prophetic mention of Jesus’ *death and resurrection*. For example, in the three Synoptic gospels, at least 30 chapters *precede* the time when Jesus first declared his death and resurrection: Matthew 1-15, Mark 1-7, Luke 1-8. Thus, there is a lengthy time period when Jesus and the twelve successfully preached coming Kingdom truths (and the

necessary response of *repentance*) well *before* Jesus’ death and resurrection were **added** to the Gospel message.

One might logically ask, “What is the actual **danger** in preaching the partial Gospel of Jesus’ death and resurrection *only*, while omitting the foundational truths of Jesus’ ardent, devoted (Luke 4:43) preaching of the Kingdom of God?” Well, such a glaring omission could mislead folks into believing that a proactive, obedient response (Luke 13:23-24, Rom. 1:5, 16:26, Heb. 5:9) is *not required*, due, perhaps, to a misconstrued notion of “grace” as doing *nothing*! Also, without the genuine Kingdom *hope*, one could be deceived into grasping a false hope (such as survival after death as a disembodied ghost) or be tempted to ultimately give up in life due to a complete *lack* of hope! Furthermore, one might neglect the vital nature of staying *faithful* (Heb. 3:6, 14) in biblical hope until the end of our lives. As an analogy, if one is expert at making electrical connections, but fails to take the *basic* step of unplugging (or turning off) the power source before working, he/she could incur deadly consequences! How much more serious are the basics required for salvation!

Luke himself had boldly highlighted future-oriented Gospel-Kingdom truths in his **first** written, well-researched account (Luke 1:3-4) — the Gospel of Luke. His future Kingdom emphasis is so clear in Luke 4:43 (showing Jesus’ divine mission of being sent to preach the Kingdom of God message in other towns). Luke 8:1, 9:10-11, 18:28-30, 19:11-27, 21:25-36, 22:28-30, and other vibrant passages are part of this picture! In this study we will overview the same powerful Kingdom focus in the book of Acts, Luke’s **second** written account: Acts 1:1. Far from observing Kingdom vocabulary and its concepts *dropped* or *minimized*, as if some sort of dispensational theory were *really* in place (relegating Jesus’ Gospel preaching to being a relic from a previous time frame), we will see that Acts boldly declares the coming Kingdom-Gospel truths as still dynamically relevant for at least 25 years *after* the momentous Pentecost events of Acts, chapter 2. In twelve references to be briefly perused, eight passages state truths in Kingdom terms very *directly*, and at least four other records indicate vital concepts linked to essential Kingdom priorities. (Quotations here are from the OGF translation, with occasional emphasis added, **onegodtranslation.com**)

1. After being *resurrected* and while demonstrating “convincing proofs” of truly being alive, Jesus gave commands to the Apostles. According to Acts 1:3b, “He [Jesus] was seen by them over a period of forty days and **he spoke about the Kingdom of God.**” Thus, Jesus, as obviously resurrected, spoke for about six weeks about the same central *Kingdom* theme which had dominated his preaching for years during the whole time of the gospels!

2. The Apostles then followed up this final, extensive (v. 3) Kingdom discussion with the lord with a very good, logical question in Acts 1:6: “And so when they had come together they asked him, ‘lord, is this the time when you are going to **restore the Kingdom to Israel?**’” One might keep in mind that the expectation that Jesus “rescue and restore Israel” (Luke 24:21) was common to Jesus’ attentive disciples (i.e., students). One might also recall that previously, within a couple of months of this time, Jesus had boldly promised that they (the Apostles) would eventually sit on thrones governing the tribes of Israel! Jesus did not scold or dismiss their question (in Acts 1:6), as if it represented a foolish obsession with earthly politics! Jesus was **not** at all like John Calvin, who stated that there are as many errors in that verse 6 question as there are words! Jesus gave a simple reply (Acts 1:7) in terms of God’s *timing*: “He replied, ‘It is not for you to know **times or periods** which the Father has set by His own authority.’” As we shall see, this same book of Acts shows, in its overall context, that the “*Kingdom to Israel*” will be ultimately **restored**.

3. As a quick but meaningful reference (in Acts 2:29b and 34a) we can observe that, “David died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this very day” and, “It was not David who went up to heaven.” Simply put, the overall biblical picture of the metaphorical *sleep of the dead* (Ps. 13:3; Acts 7:60; 13:36; 1 Cor. 15:17-20) in an *unconscious* state (Ecc. 9:5-6, 10; Ps. 6:4-5; 115:17) is vital to grasping the Scriptural **need** for the arrival of Jesus and a future Kingdom — to literally **raise** the dead (Dan. 12:2; John 5:28-29)!

4. Shortly after the meaningful Kingdom conversation of Acts 1:3, 6-7 and a notable healing miracle, Peter addressed the crowds in Acts 3:19-25a. “**Repent** therefore and turn back, so that your sins may be blotted out and so there may **come times of refreshing** from the presence of the Lord, and **that He will send Jesus, the Messiah** appointed for you. Heaven must retain him [temporarily] **until the time for the restoration of all things** [including Israel],

which God announced long ago through His holy prophets. Moses said [in Deut. 18:15-19], ‘The Lord God will put on the scene of history a prophet like me from among your brothers. You are to **listen to and obey him, everything he says to you.** Everyone who will not listen to and obey that prophet will be utterly destroyed from among the people.’ And all the prophets who have spoken have announced these days, from Samuel and those who followed after. You are the children of the prophets.”

Apparently, upcoming Kingdom realities (**the restoration of all things** — including Israel) are vital tenets of authentic Christian hope! Notice that having *sins blotted out* is tightly linked to the hope of Jesus’ glorious return!

5. Acts 8:12 provides us with a succinct summary of Philip’s ministry to certain Samaritans: “But when they believed Philip as he was heralding **the Gospel about the Kingdom of God** and the name of Jesus the Messiah, they were **being baptized** [in water], both men and women.” The Gospel of the Kingdom of God and everything for which Jesus stood was *still vital* here to Christian repentance and transformation (along with the obedient, devoted, meaningful pledge of baptism). Such realities were not at all outdated!

6. Later on, in southern Galatia (Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe) Paul and Barnabas heralded the Kingdom-Gospel, also termed “the word of God.” After severe persecution (including the stoning of Paul), they wisely exhorted the new Galatian converts in Acts 14:22: “They strengthened the disciples and **encouraged them to continue in the faith.** They said, ‘It is through **many trials** that **we enter the Kingdom of God.**’” Kingdom of God concepts and vocabulary were clearly deeply relevant during times of trials!

7. In Acts 17:22-34 when Paul brilliantly and lovingly addressed folks with pagan religious beliefs in Athens, he spoke boldly about Jesus’ future role of judgment in 17:31: “because He has set a day when He will **judge the world** with justice through **a man He has appointed**, and He gave proof of this to everyone **by resurrecting him from the dead.**” Thus Paul strongly correlates Jesus’ *resurrection* (as definitive proof) to his coming Kingdom role to “*judge the world with justice!*” Jesus’ **words** will be critical (John 12:47-50) on that day!

8. When “the word” (as sort of a *code* for the Kingdom-Gospel) was strongly pervasive in Ephesus and the province of Asia (in western Turkey), Acts 19:8 states, “Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly

for a period of three months, addressing and **persuading** them about **the Kingdom of God.**" It is very plain that one does not urgently *persuade* others about outdated norms which are no longer pertinent to the lives of true believers!

9. In Acts chapter 20, when Paul solemnly declared that he had not *held back anything useful* to the gathered elders from Ephesus, in back-to-back phrases he *absolutely linked* "the Gospel of the grace of God" to the "heralding of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God!" Acts 20:24b/25a state, "So that I [Paul] may finish my task and the ministry which I received from the lord Jesus: to testify to **the Gospel of the grace of God.** Now I know that you all, among whom I went around **heralding the Gospel of the Kingdom...**" Paul then went on in verse 27 to say, "because I have not held back from declaring to you **the whole plan of God.**" Very far from *separating* "the grace of God" from *Kingdom preaching*, Paul correlates them as synonymous concepts, two phrases which constitute "*the whole plan of God*"! So, it is crystal clear that (against a misguided dispensational theology), a "new" Pauline Gospel of grace **never replaced** an outmoded Kingdom-Gospel! The back-to-back use here of phrases about Paul's essential message make them two ways of referring to the *same Gospel*!

10. When Paul defended himself from false accusations before Felix, a Roman governor, he used the occasion to pour out his heart (Acts 24:14-16) about what deeply motivated his conscience: "But I confess this to you [Felix]: According to the Way which they call a sect, I serve the God of our fathers, believing everything written in the Law and the prophets. I have the same hope in God as they have — **that there will be a resurrection of both the just and unjust.** That is why I do my best to always have a **clear conscience** before God and before people." (See Daniel 12:1-3 and John 5:25-29.) Living *conscientiously* (as Paul did), based on two literal, future resurrections, is to stand firmly on the truth of prominent Kingdom realities!

11. The book of Acts closes much as it had begun, with a sharp focus on Kingdom of God treasures! In Rome, Paul met with certain Jewish leaders to engage in important discussions: Acts 28:23-24. "They set a day to meet with him [Paul], and then they came in even greater numbers to the place where he was staying. From morning till night Paul explained to them, **solemnly testifying about the Kingdom of God** and trying to convince them about Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the prophets. Some of them were

persuaded by what Paul said, but others refused to believe."

12. Finally, we see the striking conclusion to the entire book in Acts 28:30-31: "Paul stayed two full years there at his own expense, and he welcomed everyone who came to him, **proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Messiah** with complete openness and without restriction."

From overviewing these twelve dynamic passages in Acts (covering a time period of at least 25 years), **when** could one document that the Kingdom of God Gospel was ever **replaced** by another *minimized* Gospel? **Never!**

When was Kingdom preaching effectively **reduced** to mere preaching about Jesus' death and resurrection, while **omitting** the required foundation of Jesus' vital **words** concerning *repentance* in light of a coming, future Messianic *government* (or **Kingdom**) to be powerfully implemented on earth (Matt. 5:5, 6:10)? Once again, **never!**

Jesus said, "But seek **His Kingdom**, and these things [material needs] will be provided for you. Do not be afraid, little flock, because your Father **is delighted to give you the Kingdom**" (Luke 12:31-32). ✧

The Whole Creation Will Be Restored!

Lange comments: "The renewal or restoration of the world through **the Gospel** is a promise that pervades the whole Scriptures (Deut. 28; Isa. 11 and 65:17; Rom. 8; Rev. 21)."

Dr. Cumming eloquently says: "All that God has made, from the star in the sky to the flower upon the field, from the ephemeral insect in the sunbeam to the archangel that worships by the throne, all shall be retained; **what has gone wrong shall be made right**; what Satan has usurped shall be taken from his grasp; and this weary world of ours that has wept, and groaned, and suffered so long shall be emancipated...reinstated in more than its pristine magnificence and beauty, and **the world close with a Paradise vastly more magnificent and beautiful than that with which it began.**"

Dr. Nagelsbach adds: "There will be a renovation even of the animal world. It will be in harmony with the spirit of peace and love which will prevail in the entire new creation."

Quotes from George Peters, *The Theocratic Kingdom of Our Lord Jesus, the Christ*, 1884, Vol. 2, p. 492

Our Post Roe v. Wade World

by Barbara Buzzard

While we are very grateful for the lives that will be saved as a result of overturning Roe v. Wade, we see how desperate the battle will be. It is imperative that we know how our national stance on abortion compares to other countries. We can (wrongly) imagine ourselves to be on the right side, moderate, and even humanitarian — but that would be a delusion. The facts are that our position on abortion for 50 years has been so radical that the United States is one of only seven countries that allowed elective abortions after 20 weeks. About 75% of all nations do not permit abortions after 12 weeks.

The fact is that we are quite unlike any other country in the world (the most similar being North Korea!) in allowing abortion up to the moment of birth, without counsel and for any reason whatsoever.¹ The fact is that we are behind 75% of other countries in our “humanitarian” practice!

This contrast is even starker: when King Solomon delivered his brilliant decision on which of two contending mothers was the real mother, the genuine mother gave up her “rights” to her child in order to save that child’s life. Today, you will hear quite the opposite frame of mind from the pro-abortionist side. Today, you will hear such sentiments as: If I am not having this child, then no one can. Today, even from the highest leadership in the land there is a *celebration* of abortion, i.e. a celebration of death. The fact is that we have lost the ability to discern good from evil. The fact is that the days are evil and that evil is displayed by our *willingness to take life* rather than regard it as sacred.

The fact is that the Supreme Court decision in Roe v. Wade was egregiously flawed from the very beginning, a legal sham. Justices *invented* a right to abortion which is not in the Constitution. It is a fact that the whole edifice of abortion was built on lies. Roe v. Wade did not empower women; it lied to them. Children are not the enemy! Although the ruling has been overturned, the scourge remains.

This Is Happening on Our Watch

The irony is that we have thought of ourselves as a “Christian nation” and yet many non-Christian countries have behaved much more humanely on this matter than we have.

We often speak about loving our neighbor. Why would that not include our soon-to-be-born neighbors, our smallest neighbors?

The fact is that there is really no such thing as pro-choice. The only options are pro-death or pro-life. We have nearly been drowned in so-called pro-choice rhetoric and we have been on a collision course with the Constitution — and much more importantly, the Bible — for years.

The fact is that abortion always ends a human life. And as Christians, the taking of another’s life is a right we don’t have.

The vast majority of Bible translations use the word “murder” instead of “kill” in the Ten Commandments. The unborn are not only referred to in Scripture as children, as babies, but as *infants*.² (This, of course, makes abortion infant killing.)

We all have our ways of ignoring information we choose not to act upon. But it is to our detriment that we ignore what God says. In Scripture the word for an unborn child, *brephos* (Luke 1:41) is the same word as for a born child, *brephos* (Luke 2:12).

The fact is that ultrasounds actually “complicated” the abortion agenda because all but the most radically blind can see the “aliveness” of the unborn child. (That is why the abortion industry does all they can to prevent the mother from seeing her unborn child on an ultrasound). And that is why crisis pregnancy clinics find such an extraordinarily high rate of choosing to continue the life of the child after viewing an ultrasound.

It has been astutely said that a person’s right to swing his arm ends just where the other’s nose begins. We don’t have the right to injure another person in the exercise of our freedoms. This is why murder is a crime in every state.

What Would Happen If...

What would happen if the morning news announced the total of the previous day’s deaths from abortion? What if we were to awaken to the truth that abortion killed 2,300 unborn babies yesterday?

What would happen if this fact were taken in and acted upon: Abortion was the leading cause of death worldwide in 2021, killing 42.6 million *people*.

Dr. Martin Luther King’s advice has fallen for the most part on deaf ears: “Don’t sacrifice children for personal comfort.” He stridently denounced abortion as genocide. He believed in the human rights of *all* people, including the unborn.

As his niece Alveda King sums it up: “If MLK’s dream is to live — our babies must live.”

¹ “The U.S. finds itself in the company of China and North Korea as some of the only countries that permit

elective abortions after 20 weeks’ gestation.” Supreme Court brief No. 19-1392.

² Job 3:16 (NASV); unborn babes (Jerusalem Bible)

We all have our ways of ignoring information we choose not to act upon. But it is to our detriment that we ignore what God says.

The 890,000 babies killed last year are a *scourge upon our nation*. Because every life matters. Because all life is sacred to God. We have failed to live up to another of MLK's pronouncements:

"A man dies when he refuses to stand up for that which is right. A man dies when he refuses to stand up for justice. A man dies when he refuses to take a stand for that which is true."

Dr. Bernard Nathanson, former abortionist, said, "The abortion holocaust is beyond the ordinary discourse of morality and rational condemnation. It is not enough to pronounce it absolutely evil...The abortion industry is a new event, severed from connections with traditional presuppositions of history, psychology, politics, and morality...This is an unimaginable and limitless extremity."

May we all seek to view this as God sees it.

I came across another most challenging quotation: "Everyone, on some scale of life, is compelled to be an intellectual force. They must think. They must act. They must value. Avoidance of such is the very nature of depravity and the root of society's ills."³

What if this is right?! ✧

What They're Not Telling You

By Carlos Xavier

"A half-truth is a whole lie." — *Yiddish proverb*

A massive deception continues to be perpetrated on the public by Trinitarian apologists who claim that the New Testament time and again calls Jesus "*God*."

It's bad enough that half-truths are lies, but they are the best lies!

First, any student of the Bible will quickly see that the word "god" is a relative term used for others apart from the Father (who, by the way, Jesus calls the "only true God"! John 17:3) So although Jesus is called "god," it's obviously not meant to be understood in the ultimate, absolute sense of the word.

But most importantly, what they're not telling you is the fact that in many of the so-called Jesus is God "proof-texts," we find either a textual problem or corruption to the text! These are indisputable facts that many noted mainstream scholars have had to concede

over the centuries. Yet, more often than not, they have buried the crucial evidence in tedious, tiring prose. Add to this those prominent voices throughout history that have been silenced by the sometimes violent avalanche of orthodox opposition.

One of the first to experience this was the noted Dutch humanist Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536), most famous for exposing the so-called "Johannine Comma" corruption in 1 John 5:7. In his *Apology against the Patchworks* of one Alberto Pio, he asks whether his Catholic Church has "united now with the aid of Aristotle?" His answer: a resounding "No, because nowhere in Scripture is Christ called 'true God.' If this had been the case, the Arians would have surrendered."

He also wrote that anyone who reads the Son in John 1:1 "gives the phrase a heretical meaning. It is no less absurd to say 'the son is the father'...Granted that 'God' refers to the Father...Likewise Paul says 'God and Father' [Gal 1:4; Phil 4:20], pointing out one Person who is both God and the father of our Lord Jesus Christ."⁴

And then there's Isaac Newton whose fame as "the greatest scientific genius the world has known"⁵ hides his true passion and life's work of poring over tons of biblical manuscripts. He hid his beliefs for fear not only of losing his prestigious position at Cambridge, but also of being completely cut off from 17th century English life!⁶ In private letters sent to philosopher John Locke, another closet anti-Trinitarian "heretic," he details findings of more than 20 passages with corruptions and textual problems where Jesus is supposedly called "God."⁷

Of note during this period is the little-known Swiss Protestant Johann Jakob Wettstein (1693-1754). His motto was that "since with the same eyes we read both sacred books and edicts of a ruler, both ancient and modern books, therefore the same rules should be used in the interpretation of the former, which we use in the understanding of the latter."⁸ According to Ehrman's *Whose Word Is It?* (2006), Wettstein was a brilliant young student who as a teenager chose to devote his life to the study of biblical manuscripts. As a result, he was one of the first to expose orthodox corruptions like 1 Timothy 3:16 where the word "he" was changed to "*God* was manifest in the flesh." And as he "continued

³ Patrick Gentempo, health writer.

⁴ *Response to Lee's Annotations*

⁵ <https://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-30/faith-behind-famous-isaac-newton.html>

⁶ Newton's successor at Cambridge, noted theologian, historian, and mathematician William Whiston, himself shared Newton's anti-Trinitarian beliefs that Jesus was never clearly called "*God*!"

⁷ For more see: <http://www.newtonproject.ox.ac.uk/> and "God of Gods, and Lord of Lords: The Theology of Isaac Newton's General Scholium to the Principia" by Newton expert Dr. Stephen Snobelen.

⁸ "De interpretatione Novi Testamenti," *Novum Testamentum Graecum* 2.875.

his investigations, he found other passages typically used to affirm the doctrine of the divinity of Christ that in fact represented textual problems; when these problems are resolved on text-critical grounds, **in most instances references to Jesus' divinity are taken away.**" Eventually, his contemporaries charged him with being a proponent of Socinianism and he was removed from his post and banished from Basel, his home town.

Coming into the 20th century, we find the noted Scottish theologian, Professor of Divinity and Biblical Criticism at the University of Glasgow, William Barclay, who admitted that "on almost every occasion in the NT on which Jesus seems to be called 'God' **there's a problem either of textual criticism or of translation.** In almost every case we have to discuss which of two readings is to be accepted or which of two possible translations is to be accepted."⁹

Today's premier textual critic Dr. Daniel Wallace, founder and director of the Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts, adds that "few today would take issue with Rudolf Bultmann's oft-quoted line that '[i]n describing Christ as 'God' the NT still exercises great restraint.'"¹⁰

And finally Dr. Murray Harris writes in his well-known and widely cited *Jesus as God: The New Testament*

"Any NT use of *theos* [God] as a christological title will produce certain linguistic anomalies and ambiguities, for in all strands of the NT *theos* generally signifies the Father...It's a curious fact that each of the [disputed god texts] contains an interpretative problem of some description. Actually, most contain two or three" (p. 11, 177).

Dr. Harris goes on to list these "interpretative problems":

- punctuation: **John 1:1c; Romans 9:5**
- textual or grammatical issues: **John 1:18; 20:28; 2 Peter 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:12; 1 Timothy 3:16; Titus 2:13; 1 John 5:20**
- context: **Hebrews 1:8-9**

He continues: "Also significant is the fact that in those cases in which *o theos* certainly or probably refers to Jesus, the usage is usually accompanied by a statement in the immediate context that makes an explicit personal distinction between the Son and God the Father."

The bottom line is that Jesus is never called "the one God" or "the only true God" in the NT. ✧

⁹ *Jesus As They Saw Him: New Testament Interpretations of Jesus*, p. 21.

¹⁰ *Granville Sharp's Canon and Its Kin: Semantics and Significance*, 2009, p. 27. Dr. Brian J. Wright (Ridley College, Melbourne, Australia), a close colleague of Daniel

Reasons for Taking "1000 years" Literally in Revelation 20

From Andrew Woods, *The Coming Kingdom*, 2016

"1. John knows how to use indefinite concepts when he wants to. In [Rev 20.8], John uses the simile "like the sand of the seashore" to describe the number of those involved in the final rebellion. Yet such a conspicuous figurative expression is absent in any of John's six uses of "thousand years."

Moreover, John, in Revelation 20:3 says Satan will be released for "a short time" (*mikros chronos*). Had John wanted to indicate the Millennium will last "a long time" it would have been very easy for him to do so. In fact, other biblical writers use the expression "long time" (*polys chronos*). For example, Matthew employs it in order to depict the lengthy yet chronologically undefined period of time between Christ's advents (Matt. 25:19)...

2. In the rest of the Greek New Testament, when a number is associated with the word "year" or "years," this linguistic combination always refers to a literal duration of time. Why should the six-fold repetition of the thousand years found in Revelation 20:1-10 be the sole interpretive exception to this rule?

3. If the number "one thousand" here is not literal, how then do we interpret all of the other numbers in the Book of Revelation? What do we do with two witnesses (11:3), seven thousand people (11:13), four angels (7:1), seven angels (8:6), one hundred and forty-four thousand Jews (7:4), twelve thousand from each tribe (7:5-8), twenty-four elders (4:4), forty-two months (11:2), and one thousand two hundred and sixty days (11:3)? Thus, not taking "thousand" literally in Revelation 20:1-10 casts suspicion upon every other number in the Apocalypse, thereby rendering them nonsensical and meaningless.

4. While Revelation is a symbolic book, not everything in the book is a symbol. Generally, when the author wants us to take something symbolically he tells the reader to do so. For example, we should not take the woman in Revelation 17 literally, because the last verse in the chapter tells us that the woman represents a city (Rev. 17:18). Thus, an overt clue is given to alert the reader to the fact that a nonliteral interpretation of the woman is intended. The same can be said of the dragon or the serpent, who represents Satan according to the immediate context (Rev. 20:2)."

Wallace, adds that "textual variants exist in every potential passage where Jesus is explicitly referred to as *theos*." <https://bible.org/article/jesus-%CE%B8%CE%B5%CF%8C%CF%82-god-textual-examination>

Comments

• As ever, each month I wait in great anticipation for this blessed magazine – and thank you, Anthony, and the entire *Focus on the Kingdom* team for dedicated and unselfish service, for always fulfilling my hopes! My history is long and varied, but suffice it to say that after testing the waters of various denominations as well as many years with the Worldwide Church of God, my family and I discovered first of all the One God Seminars and possibly, simultaneously, your magazine, *Focus on the Kingdom*, and began to know we had finally hit the mother lode! From that time forward, I have read with increasing voracity your magazine and come to know you and your team! Some few years ago, I also was able to access your many Youtube renderings and find them invaluable!” — *Canada*

• “I just read, and *totally* loved, Barbara’s recent column on our Post-Truth Culture (August) and why it’s imperative for Christians to stand up. The way she expressed herself was not only articulate, but gripping.” — *New Jersey*

• “I read Barbara’s article on standing up for truth in the August *Focus on the Kingdom* issue. That one along with your other recent articles of admonition and exhortation are powerful trumpet sounds to us all. I have been spouting similarly. It is a personal challenge to stand up and thus stand out. Thank you for standing for Truth; for fighting the good fight. Far too few Christians are so courageous. Many will call to him ‘Lord, Lord’ but he will not acknowledge them in that day.” — *Michigan*

• “About ‘Three Problematic Songs’ in the September issue: There is another problematic song — ‘The Old Rugged Cross.’ Read the verses slowly. Virtually no glory is given to the Lord in the whole song. It glorifies the item instead of the Savior throughout the verses. The Bible does not say the cross was rugged, or that it was on a hill, or that it was far away!” — *Email*

• “I had a chance to read about 190 pages of one of the books you offer — *They Never Told Me This in Church* by Greg Deuble. I would really like a copy for my own studies. This is not the type of book you just read once, and the references he has for the verses and their explanation on the true Hebrew meanings are so important to someone who has been taught totally differently since I was a child.” — *Florida*

• “May God bless you and the whole *Focus* team. I want more people to read and study the *Focus*, as I have for a long time.” — *Indiana*

• “I just finished reading *The Doctrine of the Trinity: Christianity’s Self-Inflicted Wound*, by Anthony F. Buzzard and Charles F. Hunting, and it’s very good. I’m certain that I will refer to it again and

again. It’s very scholarly, yet still quite readable. This book is well researched, well documented, well thought out, and, most importantly, well founded on the Scriptures. If you’re a young adult, you *might* find it a difficult read. When I was a young adult, I was warned that *The Defense of the Faith* by Cornelius Van Til would be difficult for me to read (it wasn’t), and Anthony F. Buzzard and Charles F. Hunting’s *The Doctrine of the Trinity* is written on about the same scholarly level (although I do not recommend Van Til’s book). One thing that I really liked about *The Doctrine of the Trinity* is that it really drives home why it’s important to understand its thesis; the truths that:

1. The Father alone is the one true God;
2. Jesus is His purely human Christ;
3. The holy spirit is the Father’s (and now also the Son’s) operational presence in the world.

I did see where some preacher lambasted this book, because the authors acknowledge that, on at least two occasions, Jesus is called God. This preacher said that therefore Christ indeed must be God, because of the principle of receiving testimony on the basis of two or three witnesses. But I would say to that preacher, ‘You need to read *all of the words* in *The Doctrine of the Trinity*, because Buzzard and Hunting demonstrate that in neither case is Jesus being identified as the only true God.’” — *Email*

“We shall dwell in these glorified bodies **on the glorified earth**. This is one of the great Christian doctrines that has been **almost entirely forgotten and ignored**. Unfortunately the Christian Church — I speak generally — **does not believe this**, and therefore does not teach it. **It has lost its hope**, and this explains why it spends most of its time in trying to improve life in this world, in preaching politics...

“But something...remarkable is going to be true of us according to the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 6:1-3: ‘Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do you not know that the saints will govern or rule the world?...’ We are destined to rule, with Christ, over the world...

“This is Christianity. This is the truth by which the New Testament Christians lived. It was because of this that they were not afraid of their persecutors...They knew that this glory was coming. This was the secret of their endurance, their patience, and their triumphing over everything that was set against them.”

— Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Romans: Final Perseverance of the Saints*, p. 72, 75, 76