

# Focus on the Kingdom

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## A Squandered Heritage

by Barbara Buzzard

Once upon a time, even in church, Truth took a back seat. This was a time of theological unrest, with some saying one thing and others another. It was a time of great confusion when we lost our bearings and our guideposts. Each man *decided* what or who he would believe and what or who he would not believe. It was a time when “whatever” was the rule of thumb, though cleverly disguised. Leaders were absent. Like fish trying to swim upstream, we gulped water and flailed around. But most simply waited for the leaders to tell them right from wrong, which direction to go. Seldom or never did any of the people inquire as to how this might have happened. We did not even recognize our own condition as being that of the church in Laodicea. Far from valuing a heritage of adhering to the words of Scripture, we negotiated a New Deal. We freed ourselves from commitment to the past, determining that we were more clever than the old school, and yet we were cautious enough not to break all ties — just string them out loosely and proceed as if all is well. This is an account of a denomination caught in the act of suicide — or being swallowed up by a predator.

Once upon a time we *knew* what the Gospel was. We *knew* that Jesus came into Galilee preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom. We knew and understood that the Evil One would do everything he could to distort, corrupt and diminish that Gospel because he *knew* that by believing<sup>1</sup> it we would be saved. And knowing this enabled us to be on the alert, watchful and praying to be delivered from deceit. We understood the seriousness of an incomplete Gospel.

Mainstream Christianity has an incomplete Gospel that includes *only* Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection. Those things were not yet known or understood by the disciples when Jesus spoke them, until after his death (Matt. 16:21; Mark 8:31; Luke 18:31-34; 24:25-27). Just consider that *if* what is popularly regarded *is* the Gospel (the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus), then Jesus’ disciples *did not know the Gospel!*

<sup>1</sup> Believing, of course, means obeying.

<sup>2</sup> Carl Medearis, *Speaking of Jesus: The Art of Not-Evangelism*, 2011, p. 48-49.

<sup>3</sup> Timothy Keller, *Encounters with Jesus*, 2013, p. xxi.

We were tempted with this modern (but not improved) version of the Gospel: “The gospel is not an idea. It is not a belief. It is not a favorite verse. The gospel does not live in your church, it cannot be written down in a simple message, and it is not the sinner’s prayer. The gospel is not a what. It is not a how. The gospel is a Who. The gospel is literally the good news of Jesus. Jesus is the gospel.”<sup>2</sup>

“The Christian gospel says that we are saved — changed forever — not by what we do, and **not even by what Jesus says** to people he meets, but by what he has done for us...his birth, his sufferings...his death on the cross, and his resurrection and ascension.”<sup>3</sup>

If that does not resonate with you (and more importantly does not resonate with the Scriptures), consider this understanding of the Gospel: “What will we have to say before the bar of God’s judgment? Only one thing. Christ died in my place. That’s the gospel.”<sup>4</sup>

But Jesus said that it is “this Gospel **of the Kingdom**” which should “be preached in all the world” (Matt. 24:14). This is the authentic Gospel which we have to adhere to as zealously as a drowning person to their lifesaver. I thought Paul said, “We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the Gospel would remain with you” (Gal. 2:5). This would mean that we would have to stand our ground, not give so much as an inch.

“As the Bible teaches but one faith and one hope, so also it recognizes but one *gospel*, and pronounces a double curse on man or angel who shall dare to ‘preach any other gospel.’”<sup>5</sup>

The word “truth” has undergone a fundamental change. It is much hampered by the false philosophy that we can have *our own truth*. Rather like Pilate’s “What is truth?” it has become an unknowable and unobtainable commodity. We would only search for it if we thought it could be found and identified. And we would value it more highly if we had to search for it. Truth seekers are accused of being narrow and non-compliant to the church and culture’s demands for “tolerance” (a word never used in Scripture).<sup>6</sup> Speaking the truth in love? “Why is such speech abominated today and regarded as ‘sub-Christian’? Because the

<sup>4</sup> Alistair Begg, senior pastor of Cleveland’s Parkside Church, and voice behind the Truth for Life Christian radio broadcast, over 1,800 radio outlets in the USA.

<sup>5</sup> Wiley Jones, *The Gospel of the Kingdom*, 1879, p. 37.

<sup>6</sup> The word “tolerable” does appear in the account of Sodom and Gomorrah.

notion of truth as something which can be defined, has gone, and we are replacing it by a flabby, sentimental notion of unity and of fellowship.”<sup>7</sup>

Once upon a time we were so certain of the Kingdom message that we consecrated it with baptism as they did in Acts 8:12. The fact that baptism “is for the remission of sins proves it essential, for you must admit that we cannot be saved without that remission.”<sup>8</sup> But then others said: “There is no reason to baptize in water today.”

Once upon a time we thought it a matter of the greatest urgency to hand down the “faith once delivered.” What has made us unable to defend our beliefs/doctrines? Have we taken a slack and easy-does-it approach rather than immersing ourselves in Scripture and engaging with Truth? This has proven disastrous in terms of: 1) losing the truth ourselves and 2) failing to pass it on. What has made us incapable of keeping the faith, holding onto it as a prized heritage? Our inability to detect the true from the counterfeit leaves us in a state of dangerous vulnerability. To put it bluntly, we have been and are being deceived.

For example, we used to know that our Kingdom hope was a future event, ushered in by Jesus as he returns as a conquering King to administer justice and to rid the world of evil and of evildoers. All that the Kingdom hope entailed would have to be on board for one to recognize the Kingdom as that spoken of by Jesus and Daniel and the prophets (Dan. 2:44; 7:14, 18, 22, 27). To think that is happening now — the amillennial view which has crept into the church — is preposterous to say the least. Even a child is able to see that the world has not *yet* been freed of Satan’s influence, and indeed his rule (2 Cor. 4:4). Jesus has not failed us in his predictions and his promises. We ought not accept a state of affairs vastly different and vastly inferior to that which he promised. I am not “in my millennium”<sup>9</sup> because I am realistic enough to object to the conditions around me as not being what Jesus promised (not even close!). As a realist said, “If this is the Kingdom, I want a refund.” These tragic denials of what the founding fathers taught are current events unfolding as I write.

### “Nexting”

In connection with the doing away of our future hope (robbing us of its anticipation), let me bring in a bit of science: A new word is being used now especially in connection with our future: “nexting.” Nexting

happens in the frontal lobe of the brain. It is the anticipation, expectation of what will happen next. It is said that we think about the future at least twelve percent of the time. Our brains were made for anticipation. We enjoy the optimism of the future and the imaginings that we have of future changes, and we muse on the likelihood of our imaginings coming true.

As one philosopher put it: The human brain is an “anticipation machine,” and the making of future plans is the most important thing it does. It is said that the greatest achievement of the human brain is its ability to think about the future. Humans are unlike all other animals in possessing this ability to think about the future. The joy of “nexting” is ours and ours alone. Dare I say, we were made for it! Our world revolves around what comes next. The prophets were onto this idea of nexting before it was even heard of. They continually said, “It’s bad now, but wait for the great times to come.” There are two acts to the biblical drama. Act One involves testing and trial, success and failure, agony and groaning. *However*, Scripture paints the most beautiful pictures of the end of fear and threats, of sickness and disease and death. They are to be canceled. What is next for us beyond this “present evil age” will be peace and harmony, the joy of the whole earth being “at rest” (Isa. 14:7).

Could a book be more descriptive of “nexting” than Revelation? With its emphasis on what happens next and its many and varied time references — e.g. “after that” multiple times, “then” dozens of times — we are carried along from one extraordinary event to another, but knowing always<sup>10</sup> that there will be a climactic culmination of happenings. The “lead-up” to the arrival of Jesus as King and all of the surrounding fanfare will make our current royal events pale by comparison.

### Corrosion of the Soul

The main question posed to a recent graduating audience was this: What kind of persons ought we to be? The speaker concludes that everything else in your life will depend on your answer to that question. What is it that is so urgently required and so all-important that without it we will be moral failures? **It is a love of and hunger for justice.** “God blesses those who are hungry and thirsty for justice.”<sup>11</sup> Plato illustrated this in his dialogue with two students whose concern was not about being truthful or just, but instead about speaking *so as to appear* truthful and *convincing* others that they were truth seekers. What they were most interested in

<sup>7</sup> Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *The Basis of Christian Unity*

<sup>8</sup> Wiley Jones, *The Gospel of the Kingdom*, p. 173

<sup>9</sup> Amillennial believers think that their personal “millennium” begins at their conversion/baptism, which is their first “resurrection.”

<sup>10</sup> This is no longer true. Our understanding has undergone a sea change as we have lost the surety of Scripture.

<sup>11</sup> Matt. 5:6

was learning the art of persuasive speaking so as to be valued by politicians and lawyers. But without the passion for truth and justice this would amount to teaching a politician through rhetoric to do something unjust.

In total collision with this view is that of Socrates (and more importantly, Scripture), who said it is better to suffer wrongdoing than to do wrong oneself.<sup>12</sup> This is one of Socrates' most enduring teachings, a teaching that represents a watershed in the moral consciousness of the West. The argument for his position is simple: surely suffering injustice is terrible, but what is worse is the corrosion of soul that takes place when one commits injustice. In other words, being unjust is far more damaging to the moral structure of a person's character than enduring the slings and arrows of injustice.

There could be no more fervent practitioner of this philosophy than Jesus himself, who went willingly to the cross and suffered horrendous scourging and beating rather than striking out against his persecutors. His prayer that those who put him to death be forgiven is the noblest and the highest of all possible human standards.<sup>13</sup> One of the characteristics of Jesus which brought him his Father's approval and anointing is that he "loved righteousness and hated wickedness."<sup>14</sup> Which is to say: Jesus loved and hungered for justice. Scripture could hardly emphasize this quality with greater emphasis.

Corrosion of the soul is aided and abetted by a Christian's silence when he should speak. It is also contributed to by knowing what we should do and not doing it (the most elementary description of sin, James 4:17). How shallow it is to only consider such obvious crimes as theft, cursing, lying, etc. as sins. There are two simultaneous actions happening in every ethical choice we make. One is the effect of the choice we have made, and the second is *what and how that choice molds our character*, its contribution like that of rain, drip by drip — forming who we are becoming.

Corrosion of the soul happens when we live a lie. With the unbelievable lies that are now being told in our culture, what are we to do? I would think that at minimum we would refuse to live as though the lie were true. That would entail an active resistance; it would demand a defense of Truth. Tragically, many of our church leaders and influencers haven't taught these things and they haven't modeled them for us as necessities.<sup>15</sup> Resistance sounds like an outmoded philosophy and nothing to do with us. Instead of a

scrupulous regard for Truth, the "keep it under wraps" approach seems to have won out. It is rather like the brilliant saying: "If you don't read, what advantage have you over those who can't read?" If you don't use your voice, what advantage have you over those who have no voice? Would Jesus recognize a silent Christian? "Silence becomes cowardice when occasion demands speaking out the whole truth and acting accordingly."<sup>16</sup> Willingness to stand and speak protects us from corruption.

As the world collapses more and more into chaos, so goes the church. All churches are vulnerable — even mine, even yours. As the church keeps up with trends, it *alters* its emphasis and its doctrines, *redefines* its non-negotiables and *changes* its stance in matters of morality. In the past I have regarded the word "whatever" almost humorously, a jargon word that denotes an all-embracing inclusion of any and all behavior: anything goes; it's all good. But it is truly sobering to realize that this thinking has found a home in the thinking of our spiritual leaders. Politically we may know this philosophy as DEI: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. In matters pertaining to God, it is dangerous in the extreme, because Scripture constantly warns against this approach and dictates a narrow way, *stressing that all is not good*. What is it that evil people do? Of course they slander, they lie, cheat, steal, etc., but they also *suppress the Truth*. We don't want to even come close to that. "For the righteous anger of God is revealed from heaven against every form of godlessness and unrighteousness of people, who suppress the truth with their wickedness" (Rom. 1:18).

### The Contest for the Gospel

As we see in Hosea, we have within us a spirit of, and a tendency toward prostitution (Hos. 4:12b). (We see this more clearly in the sense of people prostituting their talents.) With regard to faith — this is a *pathology* of our nature, shown all through Scripture — we tend to waver, to lose faith, to betray what was certain in our faith. Our leaders of course have this same tendency (even more so?) to compromise, to veer off the track, to embrace the snare rather than discern it.

"A great deal of interesting history might be given with regard to the great battle of the age of the supremacy of the gospel of the Kingdom, as against spurious gospels."<sup>17</sup> The Gospel of the Kingdom is the very fabric and framework of Scripture. That fabric is a given; it cannot be changed into something it is not. If so it is a betrayal of Truth, and Truth is in crisis here.

<sup>12</sup> Bishop Robert Barron, *Imprimis*, 6, 2023.

<sup>13</sup> Since it is clear that God cannot die, we know that Jesus was His human son.

<sup>14</sup> Heb. 1:9a

<sup>15</sup> With sincerest thanks to that minority who have taught and modeled these character traits.

<sup>16</sup> Mahatma Gandhi

<sup>17</sup> W.H. Wilson

To be explicit, some are redefining the Kingdom as a present reality: “When does the kingdom happen? The kingdom happens now — through the performance of what I have called ‘present signs’: practices of healing, exorcism, and proclamation.”<sup>18</sup>

Back is the only way forward. Back to our roots and to the discovery of the Gospel of the Kingdom that we have been so privileged to know and so many do not know. Have we not gone from discovery to abandonment in a few generations (albeit not overtly)? Wrongly defining the Gospel and wrongly defining the Kingdom are both devastating to the faith.

“Faithful believers have struggled hard to hand down to their descendants the pure gospel of the Kingdom, unmixed with the traditions of men. Will you preserve it; or will you suffer hobbies and liberalism to creep in and compromise it?” (W.H. Wilson, 1981). That same question is for us today a crucial one; the corruption of the faith is at stake. There are devastating consequences for abandoning truth. ✧

## The Theocratic Kingdom of our Lord Jesus, the Christ

by George N.H. Peters, 1884

*George N.H. Peters (1825-1909) was an American Lutheran minister. His life's work, the 3-volume The Theocratic Kingdom of Our Lord Jesus, the Christ, was called “the most exhaustive, thoroughly annotated and logically arranged study of biblical prophecy that appeared in our country during the nineteenth century” by theologian Wilbur Smith. It is available to read free at [archive.org](http://archive.org). Here is an excerpt from Proposition 1 (of 206 “Propositions”):*

### **Proposition 1. The kingdom of God is a subject of vital importance.**

The Scriptures cannot be rightly comprehended without a due knowledge of this kingdom...If in error here, it will *inevitably* manifest itself, e.g. in exegesis and criticism...To illustrate:...Luther's remarks and hesitancy concerning the Apocalypse [were due] to a preconceived opinion of the kingdom, and to his not “thoroughly apprehending the doctrine of God's kingdom upon earth.” ...Van Oosterzee aptly remarks: “The idea of the kingdom of God is the golden thread which runs through all; and of this kingdom the Bible is the document.”

Its importance may be estimated by considering the following particulars:

1. The kingdom is the object designed by the oath-bound covenant.
2. It is the great theme, the burden of prophecy.
3. It is a subject which embraces a larger proportion of revelation [the whole Bible] than all other subjects combined; thus indicating the estimation in which it is held by God.
4. It was the leading subject of the preaching of John the Baptist, Christ, the disciples and apostles.
5. It was a cherished subject of preaching in the primitive Church.
6. It is the foundation of a correct scriptural preaching, for the Gospel itself is “the gospel of the kingdom.”
7. To promote its establishment Jesus appears, suffers, and dies, and to manifest it He will come again.
8. Jesus Christ Himself must be deeply interested in it, since it is a distinguishing blessing and honor given to Him by the Father, and belongs to Him as His inheritance.
9. We are invited, as the most precious of privileges, to inherit this kingdom.
10. It is the constantly presented object of faith and hope, which should influence us to prayer, duty, and watchfulness...

We are prepared, from such considerations, to appreciate the remark attributed by Lange to Starke: ‘The kingdom of heaven must form *the central point* of all theological learning.’...Schmid calls it ‘The *groundwork* of His (Christ's) teaching.’ Such testimony could be multiplied...

It is significant to the thoughtful student — a fulfillment of prophecy — that the idea of a distinctive Divine kingdom related to Christ and this earth, a kingdom which decidedly holds the foremost place in the teaching of Jesus, should be made...to come down from its first position in the Bible and occupy, when alluded to, *a very subordinate one*. In hundreds of books, where it reasonably ought to be conspicuous, a few references of a somewhat mystical and unsatisfactory nature, or a brief endorsement of the old...view that it applies to the Church, dismisses the entire subject; while inferior subjects have long chapters and even volumes in their interest. There is, to the reflecting mind, something *radically wrong* in such a change of position...

The kingdom deserves the first place in Biblical theology and the first rank in Systematic theology...While thus advocating its claims to

<sup>18</sup> Nicholas Perrin, *Biblical Theology for Life*.

doctrinal position, we do not, as sometimes unjustly charged, depreciate the importance, the value, and the exceeding preciousness of the person and death of Jesus...For without the latter the kingdom, as covenanted and promised, could not possibly be obtained...Indeed, as the student will observe, our line of reasoning proceeds to exalt the kingdom because of the vital union existing between the king and kingdom — the latter being the inheritance of the former...

The kingdom embraces so much, both in preparation and in actual realization, that, in view of its extent, the doctrine exceeds all others in magnitude, enfolding in itself nearly all doctrine. To this we may add the pregnant idea: “It lies in the nature of the case that Christian eschatology, the more the course of time advances, must become less and less an unimportant appendix, and more and more a *locus primarius* [primary focus] of Christian doctrine” (Lange).

Such a study [of the Kingdom] will relieve theologians from being driven to the humiliating expedient of virtually acknowledging that the apostles were mistaken in their notions respecting the kingdom; that they embraced “the Jewish husk” [!]....[This] has driven noted theologians — led by a preconceived doctrine of the kingdom — to place “the consciousness of the Church” (that finally obtained the truth which had escaped the grasp of the apostles!), as exhibited in Church authority or theology, or the productions of fallible men, above that of the Scriptures containing “the Jewish husk.” The importance of our doctrine is evinced, in that it reverses all this, exalting and vindicating both the Scriptures and the correct knowledge of its inspired writers.

This doctrine [of the Kingdom]...is admirably adapted to refute numerous errors, out of which religious systems are originated, and through which they are maintained. The following propositions will introduce many of these, and practically show how they are met and defeated by this doctrine alone. ✧

## The Shocking Truth about the Saints and Their Destiny

“I reached out my great and powerful arm. I made the earth. I made its people and animals. And I can give the earth to anyone I please” (Jer. 27:5, NIRV).

Scripture is a royal book — and a book about who is going to govern the world. It is concerned primarily with the question as to who gets to rule the world. Currently, the Bible says, Satan is “the god of the **present** evil system” (2 Cor 4:4). John said precisely that, when he observed that “the whole world lies in the power of the evil one” (1 John 5:19). But, as

we have repeatedly pointed out, the Bible has a happy ending. Satan’s present control of the world is not going to last forever. There is going to be a huge reversal and reset. The power over the world is going to be transferred into the hands of the faithful saints, the international church, made up of true believers of all nations (1 Cor. 6:2; Rev. 5:10; 20:1-6).

Abraham, whose name means “father of a multitude of people,” was a Christian even before the time of Christ. This statement is memorable and essential to understanding the Bible story. “The promise to Abraham and his descendants was that he will inherit the world” (Rom. 4:13). That is the stupendous job description of Abraham, and of the Messiah, and of the international saints, “the Israel of God” (Gal. 6:16).

Here are the facts about the destiny of the world and of the true believers, including of course Jesus the Messiah: Daniel should never be ignored or forgotten. Daniel provides the essential definition of the Gospel which describes Christian destiny as well as the destiny of society and the whole world-system.

We are talking about the Gospel about the Kingdom. The preaching of that Good News about the Kingdom was the deliberate subject of what Jesus said he was commissioned to do, and it provides a superb definition of the Christian faith. Luke 4:43 provides Jesus’ own job description: “I must proclaim the Gospel about the Kingdom of God to the other cities also: that is what God commissioned me to do.” The Devil understands this better than many who attend church. Luke reports Jesus’ amazing insight when he said, “When anyone hears the Gospel Message about the Kingdom of God, the Devil stands ready to snatch that Gospel of the Kingdom word from his mind so that he cannot believe it and **be saved**”! (Luke 8:12; Matt. 13:19).

The Bible is replete with the enormous truth about the world’s, and your destiny. In Psalm 2 there is the promise to the Messiah from God. “Ask of Me and I will make you master of the nations, ruler of the uttermost parts of the world.” Jesus shares that destiny with his true followers: “Hold fast until the end, and I will give you authority over the nations” (Rev. 2:26). That promise is repeated in the key verse in Revelation 5:10, where the saints have been “constituted a Kingdom and priests, and they will rule on the earth.” This fact is repeated in Revelation 20:6 where the same climax is promoted: “They will reign as kings with Messiah.” That climactic vision is repeated again in Revelation 22:5: “They will reign as kings into the ages of the ages.”

John, in Revelation, rehearsing the New Covenant promise, and commenting on the Old Covenant Scripture and vision, is simply repeating the same

stupendous truth, earlier granted to Daniel in his remarkable vision of the future in Daniel 7:27: “The dominion and power of all kingdoms on earth will be given to the people of the saints of the Most High. Their kingdom is an eternal kingdom, and all nations will serve and obey **them**.” This is precisely what the Aramaic original states. A special point about the truth of Daniel 7:27 is found in the *International Critical Commentary* on Daniel:

“In verse 27 the pronouns of the Aramaic in the phrases translated above ‘their kingdom’ and ‘obey them’ are singular, ‘its,’ ‘it’ doubtless referring to the people to whom in verse 18 the ‘sovereignty’ is given. From the context the reference to ‘the Most High’ as the nearest antecedent is fallacious, but it is accepted by TH and AV and RV...The [true] biblical interpretation is of the reign [Kingdom] of the saints...The antecedent must be, compare v. 22, the saints of God, the true believers. The LXX stresses the dominion [Kingdom] of the saints. So also in Wisdom 3:8 ‘the righteous will judge nations and rule peoples.’ And Matthew 19:28, ‘when the Son of Man sits on the throne of his glory, you (Apostles) also will sit on thrones administering the twelve tribes of Israel.’”

The same point is made in 1 Corinthians 6:2: “Do you not know [Paul is shocked at their ignorance!] that the saints are going to administer the world?” Moffat catches the sense of the Greek well when he renders 1 Corinthians 6:2: “Do you not know that the saints are going to manage the world? And if the world is going to come under your jurisdiction...”

The biblical job description and destiny of Christians founded on Exodus 19:6, applied to the Church in 1 Peter 2:9, is never in the Bible a place in “heaven” but invariably a position of authority and rule on earth. These scriptural promises seem to be hidden from the churchgoing public, but they are momentous and they reflect exactly the text we quoted above from Jeremiah 27:5.

“The time will come when the saints will possess the Kingdom” (Dan. 7:22). This will be the fulfilment of the great promise to Abraham in Genesis. It is the core of the whole Bible story and salvation. It is the heart of the Christian Gospel, in addition to, of course, the atoning death of Jesus and his resurrection.

Please do all you can to correct a very false, substitute Gospel which makes *heaven and harps* the end-game for Christians. And please do all you can to correct the egregious falsehood made out of Revelation 20:1-6. That passage is the climax of the Christian Gospel. It describes the future resurrection from death to life of the true believers. It promises the complete removal and imprisonment of the Devil. It terminates his present deceptive activity (see Rev. 12:9; 20:2-3). How glorious that millennial Kingdom will be!✧

## If God Set Out to Destroy This World

“Let us imagine that to please all our postmillennial or amillennial friends, or those of whatever description who have largely ignored the prophetic portions of the Bible, the Lord should prepare to burn up and utterly destroy this planet or earth. Let us suppose that, as so many say, the prophecies are highly figurative anyway and that to study and teach or preach them is largely speculation, and so the Lord prepares to strike the match or say the word that will utterly destroy this whole planet. What a multitude is gathered, let us imagine, to behold that great event. But wait! I see an old man who walks like a king who comes forward to interrupt the ceremony. His face has the look of authority and his voice is bold as he cries out, ‘Wait, Lord; You cannot destroy my property!’

“I can imagine the Lord might say, ‘This man is a friend of mine; let us hear what he has to say. Speak on, friend, tell the people. What is your name? To what possession do you refer? What title do you hold to the property?’

“‘My name,’ says the venerable patriarch, ‘is Abraham! From Ur of the Chaldees I came at Your command. To Canaan I came and the land You gave to me, teaching me by faith to know that I should afterward inherit it. To Isaac and Jacob You made the same promises, and all our days, though rich in gold and silver, cattle and servants, we lived as sojourners and pilgrims in tents, patiently waiting until we should inherit and possess forever our own land. This scroll in my hand, O Lord God, is a written deed to the land of Canaan, called by name, and signed by Yourself. It is a warranty deed, guaranteeing to me and my faithful children after me — the children of promise — the possession of the land forever.

“‘You may burn up, if You will, the weeds and thorns and thistles. Destroy, if You will, all disease germs and insect pests, which have increased the curse on the land because of man’s sin through the centuries. O Lord, You may shake down and burn the cities, for I look for another city which has foundations whose builder and maker is God. The elements may melt with fervent heat, but the land is mine; to me You gave it with the promise that I should inherit it with my seed. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?’

“If God wanted to please the ignorant and the scoffers concerning His prophecies, how would He face Abraham? The deed which Abraham has is the Bible.” (Rom. 4:13; Gal. 3:29)

John R. Rice, *The Coming Kingdom of Christ*, 1945, p. 28-29

## The Imprisonment of Satan

Revelation 20:3: "The angel threw him [Satan] into the abyss, shut it, and sealed it, so that he could not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were finished."

"The particular object of this binding and imprisonment of Satan is not so much for his due punishment, as for the temporary restraint and prevention of his deceptions of men. It is specifically stated to be, 'that he should not lead astray the nations any more until the thousand years are accomplished.' Ruinous deception is the Devil's trade, and all false ones and deceivers are his apprentices and children. The truth is ever against him; therefore falsehood is his particular recourse and instrument. But naked falsehood is only repulsive. What we know to be a lie cannot command our respect. 'In vain is the net spread in sight of any bird.' There is in the very framework of the soul an impossibility of feeling toward known falsehood the same as if it were truth. The structure of our being revolts against it. Untruth can only gain credence and acceptance by being so disguised as to appear to be the truth. Falsehood can have no power over us until we are led to believe and conclude that it is the truth. And this deluding of men, getting them to accept and follow lies and false hopes, under the persuasion that they are following truth, is the great work and business of Satan in every age. From this work and business he never rests so long as he has the liberty to act. In this work and business he has been engaged from the beginning. And in this work and business he is engaged now; for his binding and imprisonment do not occur until after 'the battle of the great Day of God Almighty,' and that battle has not yet come."

Joseph Seiss, *The Apocalypse: A Series of Special Lectures on the Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 1882

## Comments

• "Thank you for the December issue. I was grateful for Ken LaPrade's article, having been also a follower of The Way International ministry since the early '70's. I did not fully understand the deception until I found Focus on the Kingdom. I am blessed and thankful for the knowledge of the Truth! I am also very moved by Barbara Buzzard's articles and her commitment to the lives of the unborn." — *New Hampshire*

• "Thank you again for the monthly magazine as I was eager and hoping to receive it. Every edition has enlightened me to spread the word on monotheism and unitarian belief, as most do know that God is One and that He is the Creator. Also about the Gospel of the

Kingdom message that Messiah preached. It's very clear in the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount that Jesus knew much about the Kingdom of God, and that he was a true Messenger and the Greatest Prophet." — *New Jersey*

• "As I'm sure you've been in many others' lives, you have been the biggest catalyst and inspiration in my theological life. Thank you for your outstanding kindness, for your surpassing excellence of dedication to truth and sharing it with others so refreshingly and vividly, and for your bravery in the midst of overwhelming opposition while staying faithful to Messiah." — *Virginia*

• "I have read some of Greg Deuble's book titled *They Never Told Me This in Church!* This book seems to me to be a very interesting book and completely adjusted to the truth of the Scriptures." — *Chile*

• "Your book with C. Hunting (*The Doctrine of the Trinity: Christianity's Self-Inflicted Wound*) certainly removed 'comfortable Christianity' out of my life some 14 years ago. My throwing out the Trinity was the last straw for my church friends. I read the book reluctantly with the goal of silencing the one and only non-Trinitarian person I knew (except those 'heretic JW's'). By the time I finished it, I was eating humble pie! Thanks... it was positively life changing." — *Facebook*

## Seven Things Which "Preexisted"

**"There is all the difference in the world between a pre-existent personification and a pre-existent person.** Wisdom, for example, was never the latter [a person]...In two places in the Babylonian Talmud we are told that seven things existed before the Creation, and in each case a biblical proof-text is provided [see below]...If we turn to *Bereshith Rabbah*...we are told that, of all the things which preceded the Creation, only the Torah and the throne of glory were actually created, while the rest had simply been **decided on by God**...It follows that *all* pre-existent things could be said to exist, in one mode or another, **within the purpose of God. Neither the Fourth Gospel nor Hebrews ever speaks of the eternal logos or Wisdom in terms which compel us to regard it as a person.**"

1. The Torah (Prov. 8:22)
2. Repentance (Ps. 90:2-3)
3. Paradise (Gen. 2:8)
4. Gehenna (Isa. 30:33)
5. The throne of glory (Ps. 93:2)
6. The Temple (Jer. 17:22)
7. The name of the Messiah (Ps. 72:17)

G.B. Caird, *New Testament Theology*, p. 340-343