

Focus on the Kingdom

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Anthony Buzzard, editor

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The Golden Calf

by Bob Shutes, Wisconsin

Debauchery, Corruption and Greed

Some of us have noticed there is a disturbing difference between what Jesus taught and what we see in our pulpits and churches. The steady stream of moral failures and church scandals in the news makes us cringe with embarrassment. For starters, the Catholic Church shocked the world with its pedophile priests, cover ups and banking scandals. The Protestant world's millionaire televangelists with their private jets and obscenely expensive mansions and notorious sex scandals are another disgrace. The debauchery, corruption and greed these things reveal are ugly stains on the Body of Christ and make Christianity a laughing stock to unbelievers. Something is desperately wrong! How in the world did this happen? Clearly, there is a breakdown in the faith at some level.

Things Were Totally Out of Control

Perhaps the Old Testament can give us some insight. An example from Exodus 32 might help. It tells how Moses was leading Israel to the promised land when God called him to Mount Sinai to receive the Law. What an experience that must have been! Moses was on the mountain with God for 40 days and when he came down he found things were totally out of control. Aaron had made a golden calf for Israel to worship and God's people were partying like a bunch of pagans. There was wild dancing, drinking and a lot of immoral behavior going on. It wasn't exactly what you would expect from God's chosen people! In other words, it sounds a lot like today.

Israel Failed to Understand

Aaron had created a golden calf with his own hands and presented this pagan idol to the people as if it was a true image of God. Israel gladly embraced their new golden calf and as they worshipped it their conduct really went downhill! God, on the other hand, was not at all happy about the situation. Israel failed to understand that Aaron's golden calf did not really represent God and their misunderstanding came at a terrible cost. Many people lost their lives due to their idolatry. Judgment was not what they were expecting and it sure was not what God wanted for them.

Another Man-Made Object of Worship

These days we don't worship anything as obvious as a golden calf, but there is another man-made object of worship in our midst. Israel's vision of God was distorted by a golden calf and the destiny of many suffered as a result. Christianity's vision of God is distorted by a man-made theological illusion we call the Trinity. Could it be that the destiny of many will once again suffer as a result of a false vision? Is it possible that a failure of leadership will cause God's chosen people to lose their inheritance?

Without Vision the People Perish

Proverbs 29:18 states, "Without vision the people perish." Some translations render this as, "Where there is no vision people are unrestrained" or "the people cast off restraint" or "the people run wild" or "the people are out of control." It's no wonder that God laments, "My people are destroyed from a lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6). We have a hunch that a clear vision of God may be the antidote to much of what ails the church today.

A Biblical Vision of God and Christ

Here at Wonderful Theology our mission is to share a clear and Biblical vision of God. He is the God of Israel and we call Him our Father (His name is YHWH). His only begotten human Son is our Savior Jesus Christ. This is a true and biblical vision of God and Christ that truly brings light and understanding. Many are convinced this vision of God leads to righteousness too. We contend that the Trinity is a philosophical golden calf that distorts our vision of God and darkens the understanding. Nothing good can come of it. ✧

*This article is found at wonderfultheology.com
"This website contains ancient Biblical thoughts and teachings that will ring in your ears for years to come. Once you have heard these things you will never be able to unring this bell"!*

*Also visit the companion website
theologyallstars.com*

From Pit to Prison to Palace Joseph, from Shepherd to Superior

by Barbara Buzzard

Studying the book of Genesis has been an incredibly rich experience for all of us. I had no idea of the intrigue and devious behavior which we found (illustrating that you don't know what you don't know). We have been going through Genesis chapter by chapter in our Sunday church/Bible study (join our livestream at focusonthekingdom.org). Now we are sorry that we have come to the end of Genesis — which is to say that we were very much blessed. We were taken from Creation to Babel and from Abraham to Joseph.

When we got to chapter 27 and beyond, we found intrigue, treachery, lying, and criminal activity. But we also saw restitution, forgiveness, and love and blessing. It surprised us, puzzled us, and challenged us. Like detectives, we combed it for details and understanding. The lives of the three patriarchs of our faith were open for study. Their sins and frailties and shortcomings were not covered over. Abraham, for example, acted in impatience for God's promise of a son and because of that fathered a son who was a constant reminder of Abraham's unbelief, bringing heartbreak as well. And yet previously Abraham had behaved with absolute obedience and sterling faith. Abraham is the father of the faithful, the father of a covenant people. His God is a God of covenant, the importance of which is monumental. (Joseph was sold to people outside the covenant, and he was sold for the current slave price then.) It sometimes comes as a surprise that the Gospel was preached to Abraham, but according to Galatians 3:8 this was part of God's far-reaching plan.

God brought Joseph out of obscurity, having tested him in his role as a slave in Potiphar's prison and finding him to be trustworthy; Joseph further proved himself as he fled from Potiphar's wife, enduring inordinate and unjust prison time and its scourge of punishments. As for any of us despairing of hope and future, it must have seemed to Joseph that once more he was at the bottom. And yet "Joseph's outstanding abilities and integrity, crowned with the touch of God, were constant at every level; as prisoner and as governor he was simply the same man."¹ High praise indeed! Joseph was faithful in little but training for authority in much as in Luke 16:10. This is a clue to Joseph's character: "it was *the habit of his mind*" to seek God in everything,² to credit God for everything and to acknowledge Him in every way. This is

expressed by "God's quiet control and the man of faith's quiet victory."

Joseph's clarity of thought is seen in his explanation to his brothers: "Yes, it was God who sent me here, not you! And he has made me a counselor to Pharaoh — manager of his entire household and ruler over all Egypt" (Gen. 45:8). This generous principle and ability of God to bring good out of evil is underscored in the new covenant. "And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God" (Rom. 8:28). Joseph displayed not a hint of revenge or retribution for the murderous intent of his brothers, so much so that when Jacob died they thought that surely he would pay them back. Not so — Joseph enacted the law of love in being kind to them and in forgiveness. One can only imagine the conversation between the eleven brothers and their father when they revealed to him that Joseph was alive. Did they ever confess to him their wickedness? Ought Joseph to have told his brothers about his dream of having them bow down to him? He was young and perhaps did not display the best of judgment? Did he alienate his family?

"Why God moved the Israelites to Egypt: It is not difficult to see the divine wisdom in moving Jacob's family to Egypt. In Egypt the Israelites would have to remain a separate, distinct people, for Jacob and his sons were shepherds, an abominable occupation to Egyptians and thus a natural barrier to intermarriage. For four hundred years the Israelites would multiply under these ideal conditions."³

Joseph's character is further highlighted in Kidner's Commentary on Genesis which reveals and emphasizes "a steep moral decline in the chosen family, which only the outstanding piety of Joseph would arrest for a while."⁴ This is a fascinating glimpse into the world around him and further highlights Joseph's unique and upright character. As per 2 Peter 1:5b-6: "Your faith will produce a life of moral excellence. A life of moral excellence leads to knowing God better. Knowing God better leads to self-control. Self-control leads to patient endurance, and patient endurance leads to godliness." And with a view to these characteristics, we see that Joseph was a type of Jesus.

I won't let you go unless you bless me

And now a portrait of Joseph's father, Jacob. I was surprised to come across the expression "rip the Jacob out of you." This pertains to the experience Jacob had with the angel who fought him. It is suggested that when the angel asked Jacob what his name was that it

¹ Derek Kidner, *Genesis*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, p. 192.

² Gen. 39:9; 41:16, 51, 52; 45:8.

³ Note on Gen. 45, New Living Bible.

⁴ Kidner, p. 187.

was a reference to Jacob's name, i.e. meaning deceiver, and that God was forcing Jacob to face the truth about himself. This source⁵ suggests that Jacob had been running from God for twenty years, but that in this wrestling match with the angel he had to face God and the truth about himself. Kidner also makes a point of Jacob's early deception and in dealings with Laban, "The deceiver Jacob was deceived."⁶ It is suggested that in the early stages of this wrestling match Jacob was fighting defensively, but in the end he was fighting aggressively — for a blessing. God pursued Jacob in order that He might bless him. "And this is one of the most remarkable things about the whole adventure. What Jacob at first sought to escape, he now embraces; the thing he tried to throw down, he now clings to. This is how God transforms a Jacob into an Israel."⁷ The change of name indicates a change of status and also a channel of blessing, as it did with Abram and Sarai who became Abraham and Sarah.

"Jacob is henceforth a changed person. The man who could be a party to the cruel hoax that was played on his father and brother, and who fought Laban's treachery with crafty schemes of his own, will soon condemn the vengeful deed by Simeon and Levi...by invoking a higher concept of morality."⁸ The change of name from Jacob to Israel seems to indicate a transformation of a man once devious into a sincere and honest man before God.

In fact, we found many surprises during our survey of Genesis. Lot witnessed the miraculous protection of the two men⁹ sent from Abraham who were threatened with molestation, and yet he only left Sodom *grudgingly*. Lot had been witness to a miracle of protection as God had blinded the evil intruders so as to foil their evil plans. "In response to Abraham's intercession, God spares Lot's family during Sodom's destruction, though their grudging departure reflects their lukewarm spiritual condition."¹⁰ I confess my non-understanding of Lot's desire to remain there among these evil people and yet I humble myself before the scripture which states that Lot was righteous (2 Pet. 2:7). I will not argue with my Creator; I will not question His brilliance and His actions, His Plan and His intentions (Isa. 45:9-12).

The real-life story of Joseph seems to be a "link in a divinely ordained course of human history."¹¹ God was forever faithful to Israel, both to the man and to the nation: "Pay attention, O Israel, for you are My servant. I, the LORD, made you and I will not forget to help you" (Isa. 44:21). This assures us that however bad

things get, there will always be a remnant. God will never break covenant with His people. To the man formerly known as Jacob, God pledges blessings, safety and freedom from fear. Jacob's part of the bargain was to listen (Shema) and obey the terms of the covenant (as is ours). Genesis is a drama of emotions and hard-learned lessons. God's sovereignty was at issue time and again, an important truth essential to understanding and worshipping God as His people.

This is where it all began — with God and the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, not sinless men, but teachable, and they became fervent in their faith. May that be true of us as well! ✧

Parallels Between Joseph and Jesus

1. Like Joseph, Jesus has enemies who don't want him to rule over them (Gen. 37:8; Luke 19:14, 27).
2. Joseph was made second in command to Pharaoh, and Jesus is second in command to God, God's "right-hand man" (Gen. 41:40-44; Ps. 110:1).
3. Like Joseph, Jesus is called "my lord," *adoni*. God made Joseph lord, and God made Jesus lord (Ps. 110:1; Gen. 45:9; Acts 2:36).
4. After suffering, both Joseph and Jesus are exalted to high positions, and people will bow down to them (Gen. 42:6; Phil. 2:9-11; see Rev. 3:9)
5. As with Joseph, Jesus' suffering works for good for his brothers and sisters (Gen. 45:5, 8; Heb. 2:10-13).

The Promise of His Coming

by Brian Wright, Kentucky

On my mind lately: Where is the promise of his coming?

I think it's a good question, a fair question and the right question to ask. (I've had many people tell me over the years that they think it's a bad question and shouldn't be asked.)

The problem isn't with the question but rather with some answers — caused by losing patience with God (who Himself is patient and merciful) — which lead to unbelief: either abandonment of the promise of the future coming Kingdom on the earth and replacing it with going to heaven, or the adoption and advancement of the idea that the Kingdom has already been established on the earth: Amillennialism.

The wrong answer, whichever form it takes, is devastating to the apocalyptic faith and preaching of Jesus, the Apostles and original Christianity.

⁵ Ronald Dunn, *When Heaven is Silent*.

⁶ Kidner, p. 160.

⁷ Dunn, p. 35.

⁸ E.A. Speiser, *Genesis, The Anchor Bible*, p. 257.

⁹ These two men were actually angels (Gen. 19:1).

¹⁰NLT note on Gen. 19.

¹¹ Speiser, p. 292.

The right answer is to believe God and be patient with Him (as He is with us), and to wait expectantly for Him to do precisely what He said He would do, no matter how much time passes before He brings it to pass.

Impatience — unbelief, ungodly

Patience — belief, godlike

So where is the promise of his coming? It is presently stored up with God. It is a certainty that it will yet happen in His good timing.

Amillennialism — born of impatience and unbelief

I'm thinking about some of the people we know who have fallen into it. It grieves my spirit.

The more I think about it, the more concerned I am about it. The “good news” of Amillennialism isn't gospel. It's “fake news” — and “fake news” isn't the Messiah's trade. This is serious business. ✧

Jesus, Moral Teacher

by Carlos Xavier

Many people — Christian and not — view Jesus as a great moral teacher who came to show us how to create a good and just society in order to better this world for the future. But for Jesus there wasn't going to be much of a future for *this* evil world/society.

Instead Jesus' message was that the Kingdom of God is coming and people need to prepare by repenting, changing the way they think and live. As a result, what ultimately lies at the heart of all his teachings, ethics and morals included, is to prepare for that Kingdom and judgment.

1 Corinthians 4:5: “So do not keep passing judgment before the appointed time — until the lord comes. He will bring to light things hidden in darkness and reveal the motives of hearts. At that time each person will receive their praise from God.”

1 Peter 1:7: “The object is that your faith may result in praise, glory, and honor for you at the revelation [coming] of Jesus Messiah.”

Acts 17:31: “God 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.”

¹²Cp. Erich Sauer: “the church is the ruling aristocracy, the official administrative staff, of the coming kingdom of God” (*From Eternity to Eternity*, 1993, p. 93).

2 Peter 3:11: “What sort of people you should you be in holy and godly living, as you look out for and hasten the coming of the Day of God?”

The ethics and morals of Jesus are to prepare for the coming Kingdom; they're not to better society and turn it into that Kingdom. ✧

The Message of the Kingdom as the Only Tool to Create Immortality

by Anthony Buzzard

According to 2 Timothy 1:13 the proclamation of Paul is a **model** of health-giving words/teaching (cp. Rom. 6:17: “**model** of teaching”). The Greek word *tupos* (model, shape or form) describes the “outline” of the teaching of Jesus and Paul.

There is a fixed form of teaching in the NT and it all goes back to the teaching of Jesus about the Kingdom of God. Jesus lays out this “paradigm” or “model” in Matthew 13:11-23. The **seed** is called “**the message of the Kingdom**” in the parable of the sower (actually a parable about the progress of the Gospel of the Kingdom):

“To you is given the knowledge of the secrets of the **Kingdom of God**...When someone hears the message about the Kingdom and fails to understand it, the Evil One comes and snatches away what was sown in his mind...As for the seeds sown on good soil, they hear the message [about the Kingdom] and understand it, and produce a good harvest” (Matt. 13:11-23).

Luke's report of Jesus' teaching makes reception of this Message the absolute essential for salvation. The Kingdom is the object of faith and it is the means of salvation:

“**The seed is the message of God [the message about the Kingdom, Matt. 13:19].** Those beside the road are the people who hear, but then the Devil comes and carries off the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe it and **be saved**” (Luke 8:11-12).

Those who receive the message of the Kingdom become “the sons of **the Kingdom**” (Matt. 13:38) = the royal family in training for rulership in the coming Kingdom.¹² The Devil sows his ideas and produces “false wheat” or “tares” (a weed which looks very much like true wheat). A Christian disciple is one who has been instructed in **the Kingdom** (Matt. 13:52).

Jesus obviously believed that certain information had to take root in the heart of an individual for the salvation process to get under way. That information is

“knowledge of the Message of the Kingdom of God”: “To you it is given to understand the revealed secrets of the **Kingdom of God**, but it is not granted to these others” — those who choose not to believe (Matt. 13:11).

Peter, who was chosen as the “rock” apostle, describes the same process: Christians are “born again not from perishable **seed** [*spora*] but from an imperishable seed — **the message** of the living God which remains forever...This is **the word** which was preached to you **as the Gospel**,” i.e., the Gospel of the **Kingdom** (1 Pet. 1:23-25; see Luke 4:43; Matt. 24:14; Acts 19:8; 28:23, 31).

The germ of immortality is transmitted to the believer only by this one process, the incorruptible seed of the word of the Kingdom. Satan knows this and tries to remove the seed or corrupt it so that it will not develop into immortality (by resurrection).

There is no other message than the Gospel of the Kingdom that Jesus and the Apostles preached which can possibly transmit the seed of immortality. Having been sown, it has to be cultivated so that it can bear fruit. The early church proclaimed the Kingdom, made sure it had been grasped, and then baptized the convert: “When they believed Philip as he proclaimed the Gospel about the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus [everything Jesus stands for], they were getting baptized, both men and women” (Acts 8:12).

The Bible teaching has a definite “mold” or shape (a Messianic apocalyptic shape). Unfortunately there is another, Greek philosophical “mold” through which the teachings of Jesus were run in the second century. No wonder that the faith came out bearing a different shape! People are shocked when you give them the biblically-shaped faith.

The Platonized Christianity of the denominations (since the 2nd century) promotes a *present* “kingdom” and a destiny which has to do with departing as a disembodied soul to heaven at death. Jesus never taught these things and would have rejected them as dangerous counterfeits. The denominational system, unable to give up its cherished Gnostic Platonism, merely twists the model of the Bible to fit its non-Messianic understanding. Thus it can have the “comfort” of the Bible while maintaining the traditional status quo. That’s “the mess we’re in”!

Everyone who hears the **Kingdom** teaching/Gospel of Jesus is a candidate for immortality or destruction depending on whether they take to heart the Kingdom Message or not (including, of course, the cross of Jesus and his resurrection and coming again).

The **seed-message** (Luke 8:11) contains the spiritual information designed to spark new life (**rebirth**). God causes the rebirth through this word/seed and it launches in us a living hope (1 Pet.

1:3-4), namely the hope of **the inheritance of the Kingdom** and immortality in it.

No wonder then that Paul speaks of “the health-giving words, namely the words of the lord Messiah Jesus” (1 Tim. 6:3). These words lead to good health forever — immortality through resurrection.

Some say that the Kingdom of God is not part of the Gospel but merely of interest to students of prophecy. This theory overlooks two basic facts:

1. Jesus calls the Gospel **the Gospel about the Kingdom** (Matt. 13:19; Luke 4:43, etc.). Philip and Paul preached the Kingdom as the Gospel (Acts 8:12; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31). The Gospel of the Kingdom is equivalent to “the word of the Kingdom” and these phrases are identical in meaning to “the word of God/the Lord” and “the Gospel of God.” They also appear in the NT in the shortened form “the word” and “the Gospel.” Another synonym is “the Gospel of Christ,” or “the Gospel of salvation.” The same message of the Kingdom appears also as “the word of truth,” or “the truth.” All these terms are traced to the “parent text,” given by Jesus: The Gospel (word) **about the Kingdom of God/heaven** (Matt. 13:19). In John’s account of Jesus’ ministry the same Gospel is called “the word” or “words” of Jesus. Many Bible readers have never grasped the meaning of the Gospel as it originated with the historical Jesus (see Heb. 2:3).

2. There is only one Gospel and it is the **Gospel of the Kingdom** as proclaimed first by Jesus when he was here on earth. After the resurrection and ascension of Jesus the same Gospel — “**this** [well-known] Gospel about the Kingdom” (Matt. 24:14) — is to be announced until the end of the age, when Jesus will return to inaugurate the Kingdom of God on earth (Matt. 28:19-20). The Kingdom is the Christian hope as well as the subject of the Gospel. Reception of the Gospel message and hope bears on everything we do now. Even love and faith **spring from hope** (Col. 1:4-5).

Popular evangelism asks people to “receive Jesus.” Jesus asks us to “receive the message of the Kingdom.” There is an essential difference. Jesus is accepted through his message about the Kingdom (John 17:8, 14, 20). This is God’s creative tool designed to transmit the germ of immortality to the believer. Today it is extremely rare even to hear mentioned the biblical phrase “Gospel about the Kingdom” which is the basis of all that Jesus and the Apostles taught.

Jesus, John, Peter and Paul all agree that becoming a Christian involves responding in faith to the “seed,” which is the **Gospel about the Kingdom** (Matt. 13:19). John says of believers that “God’s seed remains within

him and he cannot go on sinning” (1 John 3:9). In the same verse John says that these are the ones who are born again (born of God).

Why is so much said today about being “born again” and *almost nothing about how that process comes about?*

According to Jesus and the Apostles it is intelligent reception of the “seed,” the Message about the Kingdom (Matt. 13:19; Luke 8:12), which causes Christian rebirth. There is a vast difference between vaguely “accepting Christ” and “understanding and accepting the Gospel word about the Kingdom.” In the language of Jesus becoming a Christian means “hearing and understanding the message about the Kingdom.” That was the whole point of his most fundamental parable — the parable of the sower.

In Mark 1:14-15 we learn that Jesus began his saving ministry by giving a command. He said, “Repent and believe God’s Gospel of the Kingdom.” Repentance means giving up our own ideas and wrong behavior and bringing our thinking and our lives into line with the Gospel of the Kingdom. Forgiveness comes from God when we repent and believe — *on the terms laid down by Jesus*, God’s accredited agent.

In Mark 4:12 we find that repentance and forgiveness come to us when we open our eyes to understand and believe Jesus’ Gospel. The problem is that people have “closed their eyes” so that they cannot repent and be forgiven. Ponder these words of Jesus in Mark 4:12. Repentance is more than just giving up what we consider bad lifestyles. Repentance as Jesus taught it means ceasing to resist the saving Gospel of the Kingdom as Jesus preached it. All repentance and forgiveness is contingent upon our acceptance of the Gospel as Jesus proclaimed it. And that Gospel has a specific content. It is all about God’s Kingdom and His desire to give you a place in it, as a servant-ruler.

God’s Kingdom is the theme of the entire Bible and so it makes perfect sense that the Gospel of the Kingdom would be the tool by which God, through Jesus, brings us into line with God’s agenda and thinking. By understanding and receiving the Gospel of the Kingdom we say “yes” to God and His plan and we become agents of that plan and thus help to bless others with the precious knowledge of how to be saved in the Kingdom to come.

God opened His mind to us all, if we are willing to believe. The Great Plan is revealed in Jeremiah 27:5: “I made the earth and all the people and animals on it. I did this with my great power and my strong arm. **I intend to give the earth to anyone I choose** [or ‘anyone who pleases me’].” Quite a gift! ✧

Isaiah 9:6

Enjoy this “sunshine” vision of the world as it will be when the Messiah, prince of peace, comes to reign. The Bible story offers you the happiest of all endings:

“You will enlarge the nation,
 You will give them great joy.
 They will rejoice in your presence
 As harvesters rejoice,
 As warriors celebrate when they divide up the plunder.
 For you will shatter their oppressive yoke and the club that strikes their shoulders,
 The cudgel the oppressor uses on them, as in the day of Midian’s defeat.
 Indeed every boot that marches and shakes the earth
 And every garment dragged through blood
 Will be used as fuel for the fire.
 For a child will be born to us;
 A Son will be given to us.
 And the government will rest on his shoulders.
 He will be called wonderful counselor, mighty god,
 father of the age to come, prince of peace.
 There will be no end to the increase of his dominion
 or of peace
 On the throne of David and over David’s Kingdom,
 To establish that Kingdom and to strengthen it with
 justice and righteousness
 From then on and forevermore.
 The zeal of the LORD of Armies will accomplish
 this.”

— Isaiah 9:3-7

“The separate titles express separate functions which belonged to the royal office of the king. **Wonderful Counselor** stresses the king’s ability as political guide and leader; **Mighty God** is better translated as ‘Divine Warrior’ and affirms the supernatural skill and strength **given to the king** for leadership in battle” (*New Century Bible Commentary*, 1980, p. 108).

Wonderful counselor:

“[Counselor is] used as a royal title elsewhere (cf. Mic 4:9). Here it probably refers to the king’s ability to devise military strategy... Does this suggest the deity of the messianic ruler? The NT certainly teaches he is God [NO!], but **did Isaiah necessarily have this in mind over 700 years before his birth?** Since Isaiah 11:2 points out that this king will receive the spirit of the Lord, which will enable him to counsel, it is possible to argue that the king’s counsel is ‘extraordinary’ because

it **finds its source in the divine spirit**" (NET Bible note).

Mighty god (not "the Almighty God" which is never a title for Jesus):

This means "mighty hero or divine hero, as reflecting the divine majesty" (*Brown, Driver, Briggs Hebrew Lexicon*).

"The predicate of divinity is not to be understood in the absolute metaphysical sense; it **means that the divine energy works through him** and is displayed in his rule" (*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*).

"A number of [scholars] have argued that the title [mighty god] portrays the king as God's representative on the battlefield, whom **God empowers in a supernatural way** (see J. H. Hayes and S. A. Irvine, *Isaiah*, 181–82). They contend that this sense seems more likely in the original context of the prophecy. They would suggest that having read the NT, we might in retrospect interpret this title as indicating the coming king's deity, but **it is unlikely that Isaiah or his audience would have understood the title in such a bold way**. Psalm 45:6 addresses the Davidic king as 'God' because he ruled and fought as **God's representative** on earth. According to proponents of this view...when the king's enemies oppose him on the battlefield, **they are, as it were, fighting against God himself**" (NET Bible note).

Eternal father (father of the coming age):

"Father of eternity describes the king, not as 'possessor of the attribute of eternity' but as one who continually acts as a father to his people" (*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*).

"This title **must not be taken in an anachronistic Trinitarian sense**. To do so would be theologically problematic, for the 'Son' is the messianic king and is distinct in his person from God the 'Father.' Rather, in its original context the title pictures the king as the protector of his people. For a similar use of 'father' see Isaiah 22:21 and Job 29:16...The use of 'everlasting' might suggest the deity of the king (as the one who has total control over eternity), but Isaiah and his audience may have understood the term as royal hyperbole emphasizing the king's long reign or enduring dynasty (for examples of such hyperbolic language used of the Davidic king, see 1 Kings 1:31; Ps. 21:4-6; 61:6-7; 72:5, 17). The New Testament indicates that the hyperbolic language is literally realized in the ultimate fulfillment of the prophecy, for Jesus will rule eternally" (NET Bible).

Prince of peace:

"This title pictures the king as one who establishes a safe socio-economic environment for his people. It

hardly depicts him as a meek individual, for he establishes peace through military strength (as the preceding context and the first two royal titles indicate). His people experience safety and prosperity because their invincible king destroys their enemies. See Psalms 72 and 144 for parallels to these themes" (NET Bible).✧

Comments

• "I am very thankful to inform you that I have received your free magazine focusing on the Kingdom for the last few months. Thank you very much for your unceasing effort and support for providing this kind of reading material. It is a huge aid for me in studying the Bible and growing spiritually." — *Philippines*

• "I am so fascinated and appreciative of the very plain and simple explanation of who God is and that Jesus is His Son and not God himself. Thank you for all your hard work and dedication to sharing these truths with all who have an ear to listen!" — *New York*

• "I was raised a Roman Catholic but have, for around 30 years, rejected a number of their teachings, leaving the Roman Catholic church as a result. After listening to your views including various debates and discussions on Youtube, I concur with so much of what you teach. I don't believe my sprinkling as a baby was a biblical baptism, so I want to be baptized." — *Australia*

• "Every Sunday, I listen to your insightful Bible study lectures, and I continue to be deeply impressed by your energetic voice and profound understanding of Biblical truth. I undertook the translation of your works into my native language, not for commercial gain, but to make them more accessible to Korean readers who may have limited knowledge of English." — *Korea*

"Here you have the other side of the picture of Jewish world-religion, the other side of the struggle of ideas between Jewish Religion and Greek Civilization, and this is the expectation of the Kingdom of God and the belief that its Coming is imminent. The Kingdom of God — that is the central idea. It is the New Age, the new state of things that will come about when the great agony has ended by God's victorious intervention on behalf of His Saints, when He comes, or sends His Representative to come, to set the world right."

— F. Crawford Burkitt, *Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*, 1914, p. 7