

# Focus on the Kingdom

Vol. 27 No. 5

Anthony Buzzard, editor

February, 2025

## Did Christ Die in Our Place as a Ransom for Our Sins?

by Carlos Xavier

I hope that we all answer the question above with a resounding “Yes!” This is the *substitutionary* atonement of Jesus, i.e. he died *in our place, for our sins*.

It should not be confused with *penal* substitutionary atonement theory, i.e., God had to take out His rage and anger on His own Son like some mad, impetuous, tyrannical father. As the authors of the book *The Lost Message* rightly noted:

“The fact is that the cross isn’t a form of cosmic child abuse — a vengeful Father, punishing his Son for an offence he has not even committed....If the cross is a personal act of violence perpetrated by God towards humankind but borne by his Son, then it makes a mockery of Jesus’ own teaching to love your enemies and to refuse to repay evil with evil.”<sup>1</sup>

So please keep this in mind as I present the substitutionary view.

Jesus says in Mark 10:45, “For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom **in the place of** [*anti*] many” (also Matt. 20:28).

The Greek preposition *anti* means as a substitute, in the place of someone else. Other examples of the Greek preposition used this way include “Archelaus reigned over Judea in place of [*anti*] his father Herod” (Matt. 2:22). And Jesus asked, “What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of [*anti*] a fish give him a snake?” (Luke 11:11).

Anthony Buzzard notes in his *One God, the Father* translation that Mark 10:45 is “A foundational saying showing that the death of Jesus was in our place (*anti*), as a substitution, following the teaching of Isa. 53:6: ‘God laid on him the iniquity of us all.’ ...Jesus did not die merely as a ‘good example.’ He died **in our place**.”

The NET Bible note adds that the Greek word for “ransom” in Mark 10:45 and Matthew 20:28 “refers to the payment of a price in order to purchase the freedom of a slave. The idea of Jesus as the ‘ransom’ is that he paid the price with his own life by standing in humanity’s place as a **substitute**, enduring the judgment that was deserved for sin.”

This principle was established by God from Genesis itself, as a result of the fall of our human

ancestors, Adam and Eve. The story of Abraham and his son Isaac in Genesis 22 is generally seen as a prototype of the Messiah Jesus’ story in the New Testament. And the Old Testament animal sacrifices pointed forward to Jesus’ substitutionary death. Innocent animals died *in place of* guilty sinners.

Also see the predictions of the suffering servant in Psalm 22 and Isaiah 42; 49-50; 52-53, specifically 53:5-12: “He was pierced for **our** offenses; he was crushed for **our** wrongdoings. The punishment for **our** well-being was laid on him, and by his wounds **we** are healed...The LORD has caused the wrongdoing of **us all** to fall on him...He was cut off from the land of the living for the wrongdoing of My people, to whom the blow was due...He himself bore the sin of **many**.” Clearly Jesus died *for our sins*, not merely as a good model or example for us to obey.

This was also the understanding of Paul who states plainly that Christ “died **for our sins** according to the Scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:3). He “gave himself **for our sins** to rescue us from this present evil age” (Gal. 1:4). He “died for us” (1 Thess. 5:10). “While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). He was “delivered up for us all” (Rom. 8:32). “He gave himself up for us” (Eph. 5:2). He “became a curse for us” (Gal. 3:13). God bought the church with “the blood of His own Son” (Acts 20:28). We were “bought with a price” (1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23).

In 2 Corinthians 5 Paul writes, “One died for all, and so all died. And he died for all, so that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for him who died for them and was raised for them...The one who knew no sin, God made to be sin on our behalf” (2 Cor. 5:14-15, 21).

George Ladd notes in *A Theology of the New Testament* that “in such passages [2 Cor. 5:15; Gal. 3:13] where it is said that Christ became a curse on our behalf, **the idea of substitution is demanded and only violence to the context can get rid of it.**”

Ladd continues, “In a number of references Paul distinctly associates the death of Christ with the Old Testament ritual and concept of sacrifice. Whether *hilasterion* (Rom. 3:25) is to be translated *mercy seat* (its apparent meaning in the LXX) or not, by the use of the word Paul makes a direct allusion to the sin offering that was presented by the High Priest on the great Day of Atonement. Paul describes the death of Christ as ‘a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God’ (Eph. 5:2).”

<sup>1</sup> Chalke & Mann, *The Lost Message*, p. 182-3.

The same understanding of Jesus' substitutionary death was held by the other Apostles:

John 1:29: "The lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!"

1 Peter 1:18-19: "You know that you were redeemed from the useless way of life handed down from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with precious blood like that of a spotless and pure lamb, the blood of Messiah."

1 Peter 2:24: "He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross" (**quoting Isa. 53:4, 12**).

Revelation 1:5: "Jesus the Messiah...who freed us from our sins at the cost of his own blood."

1 John 2:2: "He himself is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for our sins but also for the sins of the whole world" (also 1 John 4:10).

Note that this stands in sharp contrast to the so-called "limited atonement" teaching of Calvinism, that Christ died for a predestined elect/chosen few only.

The idea of one person dying in the place of many was understood by some of Jesus' own Jewish contemporaries. In John 11:50 the Jewish high priest Caiaphas speaks to the Sanhedrin: "You do not understand that it is to your advantage that one man should die for the people rather than that the whole nation should perish."

The point is that Jesus died for every person who obeys his call to repent and believe his Kingdom Gospel message (see Mark 1:14-15). This must take place in order to be forgiven and be saved, according to his parable of the sower in Mark 4, Luke 8, and Matthew 13.

Similarly, Paul in 1 Timothy 2:4-6 says that "God desires that all people be saved" and Jesus "gave himself as a ransom for all." But these scriptures should not be confused with universalism or universal reconciliation, the idea that every single human (evil or not) will eventually be saved.

The fact that the Messiah died in our place should not be understood in the penal substitutionary way of a ransom payment to Satan or to a vindictive God. The meaning behind the metaphor is simply that Jesus' blood, i.e., his life, is the means by which his followers will eventually attain the eternal life of the Kingdom age to come.

This truth is seen in the beautiful song to the Lamb in Revelation 5.9-10: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were killed, and at the price of your blood you purchased people for God from every tribe, language, people, and nation. You constituted them as a kingdom and priests to our God, and they will reign as kings on the earth." ✧

*This article is adapted from one of Carlos' debate openings. See more of his debates at [youtube.com/focusonthekingdom](http://youtube.com/focusonthekingdom)*

## How Do You "Get Saved"?

by Tracy Z, Minnesota ([kogmissions.com](http://kogmissions.com))

**B**illy Graham, like many preachers and the Jews of Paul's time, was zealous for God, but his and their zeal was and is not aligned with biblical truth.

If you are wanting to "get saved" or be "born again," you must look in Scripture and not just listen to an enthusiastic preacher who tugs at your emotions. Many think that they are saved when they believe Jesus died for them or they accept him "in their heart," and not by **knowing** him and what he preached and living in obedience to his new covenant law, the Law of Messiah.

*Faith* and *belief* in one's heart or mind are essentially the same thing. Accepting something in one's mind/heart does not mean just a feeling or emotional experience.

If you are going to "accept Jesus," first you need to know who he is and what he taught. You need to have a clear view of the narrow path he said that you must follow him on. And by knowing those things, you know that there is a good enough reason to give up your life to obey and follow him. ("Polishing rainbows in heaven" would not be enough for me!)

If you do not know what you are saved from and what you are saved for, why would you want to be saved?

**One thing we must understand is that there is no salvation without obedience.** Obedience is not a "work of the Law"; it is love of God and of Christ. As Jesus said, "If you love God, you will obey Him. If you love me, you will obey me" (1 John 5:2; John 14:15, 21, 23; see also Heb. 5:9).

But how can you obey if you do not know what God and Jesus said?

### Romans 10

Let's take a look at Romans 10. Paul wanted the Israelites to be saved, because he knew their zeal did not align with God's truths. They were ignoring God's way of being made right and they refused to submit to what God said (v. 1-2).

Paul tells us that "the Messiah is the end of the Law [of Moses] and that being right now comes by believing" (v. 4).

But believing what?

"Being made right comes from believing the **word of faith** that is preached" (v. 8).

What was the word or Gospel of faith that Jesus preached? The coming Kingdom of God over all the earth!

Then it says that if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved (v. 9). But

we can't stop there. We need to read the context and also consider the rest of Scripture, and then tie that all together.

We also can't stop with the verse that says, "for everyone who calls on the name of the lord will be saved" (v. 13). We must ask what it means to call on the lord if we want to be saved. It doesn't mean that you just call out to Jesus, "Forgive me and I ask you into my heart."

Verses 14 and 15 ask this question, and in the question is the answer!

"How then will people call on him [Jesus] unless they have **believed him**? And how will they believe him unless they have heard him preaching the Gospel? And how will they hear it unless someone preaches it to them?"

First someone must preach *the Gospel that Jesus preached* — the Gospel about the Kingdom. This doesn't have to be from a pulpit or at some big revival meeting. It can be one friend sharing with another. But what they preach is most important. **If it is false preaching it does no good!**

So someone must preach the same Gospel that Jesus preached — in order for people to hear so they can choose to believe what they heard. As it says, how can they believe in Jesus if they have not heard him preaching? Being saved begins with hearing who Jesus is, what he taught, what he did, and his role in God's Kingdom plan; and then *choosing* to believe and obey.

Paul continues in verses 15-17, "As it is written, 'How beautiful are those who preach the Gospel!' [quoting Isaiah 52:7 about the future Kingdom]. **But not all have obeyed the Gospel.** As Isaiah says, 'Lord, who has believed our message?' So then **belief is based on hearing — hearing the Gospel preached by the Messiah.**"

Many people heard and hear, but as Jesus said, only a few choose to believe *and* follow. Even the demons believe, but they have not submitted to him nor are they following him, meaning living according to what he taught.

People have a choice. You have a choice. You can verify and believe what I am telling you today or not. Back then and today not all *obey* the good news. But to give a person the opportunity to choose faith, they must hear something — and that something is the **message that Jesus preached** — the Gospel he preached about the coming Kingdom of God.

Knowing Jesus and what he preached is not just a line or two. Go read Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and confirm it in Acts.

You can't possibly *know* me just by hearing a thing or two I have done or where I was born. Knowing Jesus is knowing the new covenant that he revealed to all of

mankind, and the hope of resurrection and immortality when he comes to restore the earth.

Romans 10 closes with, "God says, 'All day long I have held out my hands to a **disobedient** and stubborn people!'" (v. 21).

Don't be one of those people!

Hebrews 5:9 says that Jesus is the source of salvation to all who **obey him**: "Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through the things which he suffered. And by being perfected in this way, he became the source of the salvation of the age to come to all who **obey him.**"

Jesus learned obedience to the Father, and if he did, we must too, if we say we are following him. Jesus did not just accept the Father "in his heart" as much of Christendom preaches today; he truly accepted the Father's *words* in his heart and mind and that produced obedience.

Because Jesus was obedient, even to the point of death, we too have the opportunity to "be saved" from the grave as well.

Because of Jesus we can be saved. Because of Jesus we are being saved. And because of Jesus, we will be saved when he returns — *if* we obey. Again, we do not want to be like the disobedient and stubborn Israelites, or have zeal without knowledge.

Knowledge of who Jesus is and knowledge of the Gospel of the Kingdom that he preached, is essential for salvation. We must hear and know what he preached so that we can choose to believe it is true and so that we can choose to follow and obey.

In Acts 2 when they heard what Peter preached they were deeply touched, but this was not simply an emotional response, as if Peter was telling them to "accept Jesus in their hearts." It was because they actually believed what Peter said, and it moved them to action; they wanted to obey.

We know that they knew of the Kingdom hope because Acts 8:12 says they must have knowledge of Jesus (including his death for sins), and understanding of the coming Kingdom of God that he proclaimed before they were baptized.

So in Acts 2 these people were cut to the heart after hearing and then asked, What must we do (as a result of our belief)? Peter said, "Repent and be baptized."

Baptism is the sealing of the covenant. It is similar to when the Israelites agreed to the Law God gave to Moses and they made an offering to seal the covenant. But that was not and is not the end. It is only the beginning. The Israelites were expected to obey God; that was part of the covenant, and when it was sealed with the sacrifice they were required to hold up their end of the agreement. That is just like baptism under the new covenant that Messiah required of Jews and Gentiles alike.

If we love Jesus, we will obey him. We will follow what he said to do and not do what he said not to do. As we learn obedience, we are in the process of being saved.

If we finish the race, as Paul said, if we follow Jesus till the end of the race — until we die or Jesus comes — we can know for certain that we will be saved.

Salvation comes when Jesus returns, not at an altar call or when you “accept Jesus in your heart.” And that salvation will be *amazing* — resurrection, immortality, and reigning with Jesus on this earth over all the nations.

“Being saved” is hearing the new covenant that Jesus preached and saying, “I agree to follow and obey this covenant.” It is you taking that step and responding to what you heard.

The true “altar call” is not about a preacher tugging at your heart and coming to the stage while emotional music is playing. It is about you hearing the message about Jesus, what he taught, and what he did. It is about hearing the Gospel of the Kingdom and believing what you heard and desiring to follow Jesus and his teachings, and desiring to be in the future Kingdom at any cost.

It is not just getting dipped in the water or saying you “believe in Jesus.” It is a life commitment. It isn’t just about “asking Jesus into your heart” and then going on and living the way you would like to. It is a radical change. It is the most important decision you will ever make in your entire life. It will affect your life today and into eternity. It will determine if you are resurrected with a glorified body never to die again, or if you are destroyed in the Lake of Fire and forgotten.

If you want to follow Jesus then you make that decision after hearing the full Gospel. You put your life on the altar. You repent and you get baptized. When you do this, if you fall you can get up, be forgiven, and keep following.

If you want to be saved, be resurrected and made immortal, and reign with Jesus in the future Kingdom and live forever with God also on this earth, then you need to make the choice to follow Jesus today. If you wait, you could die tomorrow and then it will be too late.

I encourage you to seriously consider this; it is a big decision, but if you choose to know and follow Jesus, he will help you. He will be with you through all the ups and downs in life. When you choose to lay down your life today, you can know for certain that there is a better life coming. You know that Jesus is coming, you will be resurrected, things will be made right, and justice will be done. This decision and the Kingdom hope will give you strength for today and hope for the future. ✧

## The Royal Road to Immortality: The Seed and the Seeds

by Anthony Buzzard

It is well established that Jesus is the seed of the woman promised as the world’s remedy soon after the catastrophic fall of man (Gen. 3:15). Galatians 3:19 makes Jesus the recipient of the promise. Not only is he the promised redeemer, he is “the one to whom the [Abrahamic] promise was made.” Jesus in other words is the heir to the world-throne and commissioned to supervise a coming new world order with headquarters in Jerusalem (Jer. 23:5, etc.). The Bible is after all really about one thing: Who gets the land? What could be more pertinent to the present chaos in the Middle East? Christians know how the story ends. It ends with the Messiah in charge, equipped to bring the wicked to justice and promote the righteous to positions of influence (Isa. 32:1; Prov. 25:5; Dan 7:18, 22, 27; 1 Cor. 6:2, etc.).

In the interim, by the way, it is important not to be misled into thinking that ethnic Israel can expect to dwell in the land peacefully, while she is in disobedience to the Messiah who has come and is coming again. Possession of the land was never unconditional. It was for unbelief that the exile of Israel under Nebuchadnezzar occurred. It was through unbelief that Israel was again expelled from the land in AD 70. And for the same unbelief she is destined to suffer the great tribulation, “the time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jer. 30, 31; Dan 12:1; Matt. 24:21). Final repentance of the remnant of ethnic Israel will enable them to survive into the times of the Kingdom. So there is indeed a future for Israel when she accepts her Messiah. Acceptance of that Messiah would be immensely easier (as also for Muslims) if the true version of who Jesus is were presented to them. Why should a Muslim or Jew accept a Jesus who is part of a Triune God?

Jesus’ story, indeed the story of the Bible as a whole, is nothing but a royal, Davidic, Messianic story. It is spiritual politics from start to finish. The Devil has really only one trick, and that is to separate Jesus from his teachings. You can preach “Jesus” endlessly, but is this really Jesus if he is divorced from his own teachings/Gospel? (see Mark 8:38: “and my words”).

### “The word” is not the Bible!

I think if we reread the New Testament with this in mind, we find so much of the writing there dedicated to saying: *You must hold on to the “word,” and by “word” is meant the “Gospel of the Kingdom” (Matt. 13:19).* **“Word” in the Bible is not just a synonym for the Bible.** The Bible generally calls itself “the Scriptures.” “The word” in the NT means the saving

Gospel, the heart of the Bible. The “word” is to the Scriptures as the bullseye is to the target. Satan is a master of getting rid of the essential information. Muddle the language and you have everything confused. While the public thinks that the Bible is “the word of God,” Jesus said “the **seed** is the word of God,” that is, the Gospel (Luke 8:11).

Jesus counteracts this verbal confusion with his brilliant clarity. He had read Ezekiel’s parable of the royal cedar tree (Ezek. 17). He knows himself to be God’s ally and bearer of God’s Gospel of the Kingdom. Thus he embarks on the work of spreading the news of the New Order coming. He is the purveyor of the formula of immortality. All life springs from a seed. Seeds bear fruit. Based on that fundamental notion about seeds presented also in Genesis 1, Jesus goes about creating **the new creation**. He sows the royal family, his own brothers and sisters, by sowing *his* seed (Luke 8:5). His name for a Christian is “a son of the Kingdom” or a “disciple of the Kingdom” — royal children or royal students. The Messiah, having redefined the family as “those who hear the word and do it,” conveys the secret about how this divine Kingdom life is to be acquired and propagated:

“The sower went out to sow **his** seed” (Luke 8:5). The analogy with reproduction is obvious. Jesus reproduces himself in others by transmitting the seed message of the Kingdom (Matt. 13:19), which dwells firstly in him. The seed Message has been part of his DNA, so to speak, since the moment God created the Son in Mary’s womb. The Son is marked out by the Father at his baptism at the hands of John, an important stage of the Christian career as the public sealing of our Kingdom confession. The voice of the Father provides the commentary: “This is my beloved Son. **Listen** to what he has to say” — not just “Watch him die and be buried and rise.” *Listen* to what he preaches as Gospel. *Listen* to his instructions about being reborn for immortality. “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” It is rather fascinating that Luke reports: “When he said these things [the parable of the sower] he would customarily raise his voice” (Luke 8:8).

WWJD (“What would Jesus do?”) ought also to read “WWJS — What would Jesus *say*?” Jesus provided the script for all evangelism when he commanded, “Preach that the Kingdom is at hand” (Matt. 10:7). How strange that the word “Kingdom” is absent from almost every evangelical tract that has ever been printed!

Prior to the massively important parable of the sower, Jesus has redefined the family. When his parents seek to talk to him, he diverts attention to a much greater truth. “My mother and my brothers are those who hear **the word of God** [the Gospel] and do it” (Luke 8:21). His real affinity is not with his family

(who even thought at one stage that their son had gone out of his mind), but with those who respond to the Kingdom message. Jesus, as George Ladd observed, divides society “into two antithetical classes: those who hear and receive the word of the Kingdom and those who either do not know it or reject it.” These two camps represent the two categories of human beings — the degenerates and the regenerates. Unless a man begins all over again, unless he is born from above, born again, “he cannot see or enter the Kingdom of God” (John 3:3, 5). If they understood and received the Gospel of the Kingdom (see Matt. 13:19), they would repent and be forgiven (see Mark 4:11-12). That is the bottom line of all of Jesus’ theology.

### Born Again from the Seed

It is interesting to ask audiences: If being born again is the absolute essential for salvation — rebirth under the influence of spirit — why is it that Jesus according to Matthew, Mark and Luke did not ever use that phrase about *rebirth*? Why do Matthew, Mark and Luke not mention being “born again” in so many words? Jesus did not even mention the word **spirit** in the synoptics! The answer must be that it is impossible that Jesus did not constantly speak of rebirth. The key is that he used different metaphors and parables (comparisons) to get his point over. In the synoptics, at the heart of the New Covenant teaching of Messiah, the immortality program is described in terms of new birth from **seed**, namely the seed which is the “word of God” (Luke 8:11) = the “word of the Kingdom” (Matt. 13:19). The Gospel/word of the Kingdom is presented by Jesus as the immortality formula, the elixir of life, the key to indestructible existence. With the seed of new life we are truly living. Without having taken in that seed, we are dead while we live. Two camps: the regenerate and the degenerate. Jesus is creating the personnel of the Kingdom by rebirth. He is breeding the new race of immortals. (The Satanic caricature of this is the hideous episode described in Gen. 6.)

The carrier of this new life is the teaching of the Messiah, his Gospel of the Kingdom, the words “which are spirit and life” (John 6:63). As that seed germinates in the mind (heart) of the listener, a new existence begins. It is an explosive event, attended by massive excitement. A whole new vista opens up. The heart soars as it contemplates life forever, the Life of the Coming Age, the Life of the Kingdom.

If one scours Bible Dictionary articles on “regeneration” very occasionally one hits upon an excellent observation about what Jesus taught on this issue: “The parable of the sower implies that the specific life of the Kingdom arises in the human heart by the sinking in of the Gospel (cp. “Let these sayings sink down into your ears”), and its producing, as it

were, **a new root of personality**” (*Hastings Dictionary of the Bible*, “Regeneration,” p. 216).

The dictionary does not however elaborate on what that seed really is. Luke does. He says, “The seed is the word of God” (Luke 8:11). Mark likewise says: The seed is “the word” (Mark 4:14). Matthew gives the expanded phrase: the seed is “**the word of the Kingdom**” (Matt. 13:19). No wonder Jesus accused the establishment of taking away the key of knowledge, the key of the Kingdom (Luke 11:52; Matt. 23:13).

Once the essential creative seed of immortality is identified as the Gospel of the Kingdom, the rest of the New Testament presents itself as commentary on this central theme. Every exhortation to “remain in the **word**” (John 15:7) or “let the **word** of the Messiah abide in you richly” (Col. 3:16) is embedded in the idea that the Kingdom-Gospel is to govern all our thinking and action. John’s Gospel is largely a sermon on accepting “the word” and “words” of Jesus. Peter rejoices in the **seed of rebirth** as the “**word** of the Gospel which was preached to you” (1 Pet. 1:22-25, where seed, rebirth and Gospel are the topic). James speaks likewise of the “word of Truth” as the tool of rebirth (James 1:18) and of the word thus **implanted**.

Paul also observes that Christians are those “born of the spirit,” that is, those born of the Promise (Gal. 4:28-29). But Paul prefers the image of the new creation. Just as the light first shone in Genesis at creation, so the light of the Gospel of the glory (Kingdom) of the Messiah shines in our hearts (2 Cor. 4:6). Paul is a dogged preacher of the Gospel of the Kingdom and sums up his whole career as the “heralding of the Kingdom” (Acts 20:25), where he *identifies* the **Gospel of grace as the Gospel of the Kingdom (Acts 20:24-25)**; see also Acts 8:12, Philip, and Paul’s relentless emphasis on the Gospel of the Kingdom in Acts 19:8; 28:23, 31). John echoes his fellow Apostles when he points to the **indwelling seed** in **reborn** believers as the key to triumphant Christianity (1 John 3:9).

I believe the Kingdom faith of Jesus must confront the watered down version of the Gospel now massively widespread. Dispensationalism, either in its “ultra” form or otherwise, has achieved a separation of Paul from Jesus and thus a separation of the Gospel from Jesus.

Romans 10:8-17 has been mishandled to give the impression that only the death and resurrection of Jesus counted for Paul in the Gospel. If that were so, Paul would have abandoned the Gospel of Jesus. Paul would have disobeyed the Great Commission. Paul would have put himself under his own curse (Gal. 1) for

subtracting from the Gospel the essential Kingdom element so important to Jesus as the treasure of saving wisdom and understanding. But Paul did not depart one iota from the Messiah’s Gospel. He declared as his resounding conclusion in Romans 10:17 that “faith comes from hearing and hearing from the Messiah’s **word**,” i.e., Messiah’s **Gospel**. He observed in verse 14 that one must hear Jesus preaching in order to be saved: “How can they **believe in him whom** they have not heard [preaching]” (see NASV, not NIV).

So everything goes back to Jesus, who for some 30 chapters in the Synoptics preached the Gospel *without at that stage any mention of his death and resurrection*. The royal road to immortality and rulership in the Kingdom to come — as well as peace on earth for the human race — begins and ends with Jesus who was adamant in his rejection of any notion of coequal Deity: “Why do you call me good? There is none good but the one God” (Matt. 19:17).

Our task is to announce far and wide (Luke 9:60) the Kingdom of God as Gospel, and it is the Kingdom of the one God of Israel to be administered by the human Messiah, the Son of that Living God. There is much work to be done. The Son of God “came to bring us an **understanding** in order that we may know God” (1 John 5:20). The royal road to the Kingdom depends not only on the death and resurrection of Jesus<sup>2</sup> but equally on the Messiah’s knowledge and understanding. “By his **knowledge** shall my righteous one cause the many to be righteous” (Isa. 53:11). It is “those who have **insight** who will shine brightly in the Kingdom” (Dan. 12:3).

Let us work for that goal and thus bear fruit by expanding the royal family whom Jesus loves so much. ✧

## Comments

- “It was a blessing to find books and videos from Sir Anthony Buzzard as I work to educate Christians about the Trinity vs. Jesus the Son of God.” — *New Jersey*

- “We are a family of 7 (originally from Germany) who have come to settle in Australia. About 5 years ago, we left the charismatic/pentecostal fellowship we had been part of for many years, and along with it the tongues movement, as well as the Trinitarian mindset. On this note, thank you sincerely for the resources you have made available — *The Doctrine of the Trinity* for example and various talks/videos on the internet. Our

<sup>2</sup> Contrast with Luke 4:43 Billy Graham’s remarkable view that “Jesus came to do three days’ work.”

journey is towards understanding how the title ‘God,’ in an ultimate and superior sense, is assumed by the Father, who is called:

*the Highest, the Most High, God in the Highest, the Almighty, Lord Almighty, Almighty God, the one God, only God, only true God, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Potentate, Lord of Heaven and Earth, Lord God, one God and Father of All, Eternal King, Master in Heaven, Lord God Omnipotent, the Great God, Head of Christ, Faithful Creator, ‘Ya’ (as in ‘Alleluia’), He Who Is Over All, no other God but one* (we have identified about 120 titles of the Father in the New Testament). This is completely liberating, but also a major challenge to communicate to a world so deeply influenced by the Council of Nicea and its far-reaching outworkings.” — *Australia*

- “In my childhood (I was raised in the Catholic tradition), with all the childish naivety, I believed that adults were telling me the truth. As a child, I approached God very seriously. During my first confession, the priest even told me: ‘You cannot take this so seriously!’ When I was 15, I asked one of the priests to explain the concept of the Trinity to me, because this dogma seemed disturbingly illogical. He told me that it couldn’t be explained because it was a mystery. I really disliked this answer, and at this moment my heart turned away from God. I thought it was all just a big lie. I was at the age of adolescence, and young people love to contest.

“For the next 14 years, I proudly (where does this pride come from?) called myself a rational atheist. My pride was so great that I decided to read the Bible just to prove that it was all a lie. I started with Matthew. Already at Matthew 3:17, I started having serious doubts. After reading the Sermon on the Mount, I had to lie down because it made such an impression on me — just as it did on the participants of that event 2000 years ago. And that’s when I was converted :) That was 23 years ago. Since then, I’ve been reading every day, and my faith has very slowly matured.

“There is a group of Christians in Poland who call themselves anti-Trinitarians, but most of them believe in the preexistence of Jesus, thinking that the issue isn’t crucial. I disagree with that. For me, belief in preexistence is disturbingly similar to the belief in the Trinity because it takes away Jesus’ humanity, thus preventing us from following him.

“My understanding of the future is as follows: the signs in Matthew 24 announce the beginning of the 70th ‘week.’ I believe the temple in Jerusalem will be rebuilt. In the middle of the ‘week,’ the Antichrist will sit in the temple, and then (after the abomination of desolation) we will face the events of the Great Tribulation for about 3.5 years, which will end with the

Parousia, the first resurrection (of the believers), the post-tribulation rapture of the resurrected and the living believers on Earth at that time to meet Jesus in the clouds, and the return with him to the Mount of Olives and the establishment of the 1000-year Kingdom and the binding of Satan for that time. After a thousand years, Satan will be ‘loosed for a little time’ and ultimately defeated by Jesus; the resurrection of the unbelievers will occur, and the Judgment of the unbelievers based on their acts will take place, followed by God’s dwelling with the believers. I think that by preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, we are actually bringing his coming closer (Matt. 24:14), and that’s wonderful.

“Once again, Professor, thank you very much for your marvelous work. Now I’m reading *The Coming Kingdom of the Messiah*, but I try to read carefully, so in a few days, I’ve only read half of it because I look up every reference in Scripture, and often instead of one verse or even a few verses in context, I read the whole book! Yesterday I cried reading the letters to the churches in Revelation — when read in the context of the Kingdom that is to come, they show all their power!” — *Poland*

- “What a breath of fresh air to hear the truth of the Scriptures! Thank you very much for the work you are doing — proclaiming the true Gospel and teaching biblical Christianity.” — *Illinois*

## Encyclopedia Americana

“Unitarianism as a theological movement began much earlier in history; indeed it antedated Trinitarianism by many decades. Christianity derived from Judaism and Judaism was strictly Unitarian. The road which led from Jerusalem to Nicea was scarcely a straight one. **Fourth-century Trinitarianism did not reflect accurately early Christian teaching regarding the nature of God; it was, on the contrary, a deviation from this teaching.** It therefore developed against constant Unitarian, or at least anti-Trinitarian opposition, and it was never wholly victorious...

“It must be reemphasized that the concept God, understood as a single, undivided personality, precedes the Nicean notion of a Deity defined as three persons sharing one essence. Unitarianism is the early norm, Trinitarianism a later deviation from this norm. It is therefore more proper to speak of Trinitarianism as an anti-Unitarian movement than of Unitarianism as an anti-Trinitarian mode of theological speculation.”

“Unitarianism,” *Encyclopedia Americana*, 1956, Vol. 27, p. 294L