

Focus on the Kingdom

Vol. 28 No. 12

Anthony Buzzard, editor

September, 2026

Called AND Chosen

by Terry Anderson, Minnesota

Abraham was the 10th generation after Noah and the Flood. It is believed that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament. So where did Abram get his knowledge about the one God, the God of Noah and Enoch? I assume that most of it came via word of mouth. Abram lived among pagan peoples and was probably very familiar with their beliefs and practices. Moon worship was common in Ur of the Chaldees. Joshua 24:3 states that “Terah, Abraham’s father, worshipped other gods.” So Abram was surrounded by paganism, yet somehow found a way to resist it and believe in the monotheism of Noah, though that belief system was not pervasive or well received amongst the inhabitants of Ur and surrounding areas.

Galatians 3:6 says, “Abraham believed God and as a result he was reckoned to be right with God.” In spite of the fact that Abraham was surrounded by anti-God pagan philosophies, he found it a more logical thought process to believe in this ONE GOD theory that came to him from oral traditions. Why? The Scriptures don’t tell us why Abraham believed God. It just says he did.

This is where the “calling” comes in. God reaches out with His spirit and begins to work with individuals who possibly would accept the “calling.” Matthew 22:14, which states that “many are **called**, but few are **chosen**,” indicates that the process must continue to the end. It’s not just a matter of “*Thank you, God, for that information and calling, but I think I’ll wait a while and check out some other religious beliefs before I make a commitment.*” I don’t think God is going to make multiple “callings” to the same individual. The parable of the “sower and the seed” is pretty explicit about how this process works. If the calling is not accepted, or accepted and later rejected, then that individual is in mortal danger, as Hebrews 6:6 states plainly.

I quote from an article at Torah.com entitled “How Did Abraham Discover God? The Rationalistic Approach.” The article quotes the preeminent Jewish scholar Maimonides, who in his

Laws of Idolatry describes Abraham as the hero of monotheism:

“After this mighty one [Abraham] was weaned, *he began to search for knowledge* while he was yet young, reflecting day and night. And he wondered how the sphere [earth] could follow its path continually, if it had nothing to direct it? And who makes it revolve (for it cannot rotate itself)? He had no teacher, nor anyone to inform him, being deep inside Ur of the Chaldees among foolish idolaters. His father and mother and all the people were idolaters, and he would worship along with them; but his mind searched to gain understanding until he grasped the way of truth, knowing rightness through his correct understanding. He knew that there is one God, and He directs the sphere, and He created all, and in all of existence there is no God but He.”

Jewish commentators over the centuries have understood that Abraham was special. It was also a special focus for Jesus when he castigated the Pharisees and Sadducees in Matthew 3:9, saying that God could, if He wished, raise up children for Abraham from stones.

Abraham was alone in a spiritual wilderness of paganism (except for his nephew Lot). This became painfully clear when he was confronted by the angels in reference to Sodom and its inhabitants. Long before that, Abraham had consistently chosen to follow the God who had revealed Himself to him. God undoubtedly had followed Abraham’s life from the beginning. He watched and waited until He was convinced that this man was the one who He could trust and depend on. But God’s trust had to be verified and confirmed. This was done in two parts. The first was telling Abram to leave Ur and go to a new land with all his possessions. The second was asking Abram to sacrifice his son Isaac. These were not easy tests, to say the least. But God absolutely knew that Abraham was the one, the chosen one, after he trusted God during the test of the sacrifice of Isaac.

Returning to the parable of the “sower and the seed,” we learn that the many being called are represented by the many seeds being sown. There are 4 examples of how the seed (calling) ends unsuccessfully or successfully. The first three

examples — pathway, stony ground and thorns — give us an understanding of how the calling is rejected. The last one, the good soil, is confirmation of a good choice that leads to being **“chosen.”** Intelligent understanding and acceptance of the Kingdom Gospel message, and the will to hold to that truth to the end, signals the process of being **“chosen.”**

Abraham fulfilled this process of critical thought and acceptance. He must have thought often about the ONE GOD and all the stories he had heard about creation, Noah, the Tower of Babel, etc. In this process he was undoubtedly challenged by Satan with thoughts about God, God’s righteousness, God’s fairness and God’s ultimate claim to be the only ONE, the eternal, self-existing God who created the entire universe and everything in it. Where Abraham differed from others was in his final analysis of God. After maybe months and years of this analysis, Abraham came to the conclusion that the monotheistic God (the God of Abel, Noah, and Enoch), not the god of the pagans, was the One he would go “all in for.” In other words, Abram made an irreversible decision; there was no turning back. And that was the point when he was not only **called** but **chosen**.

I mention all of this because Abraham is the central patriarch in God’s plan. Along with David, these two men were critical in God’s plan concerning the promises of the Kingdom and the King to rule that Kingdom. Abraham’s and David’s names are mentioned over 1300 times in the Bible. God made the two great covenants with Abraham and David.

I have developed these thoughts to get you to think in terms of your **calling** and a decision by God and Jesus in your being **“chosen.”** We each have a story of our journeys to where we are now spiritually. Whether those journeys brought us out of Catholicism, Protestantism, Islam, Hinduism or atheism/agnosticism, it really doesn’t matter. The fact that we all challenged our previous belief systems is not unlike what Abram did in his journey to the monotheistic God of Abel, Enoch and Noah.

So what makes you different from millions of other “Christians” who may or may not have a **calling** at this time? The vast majority of Christians today, and for that matter historically, are satisfied with what the “church” teaches them. Acts 17:11 and Revelation 2:2 give us examples of those who were not afraid to challenge accepted authority. In the case of Paul and the Bereans, he acknowledged

that they were “more noble minded” because of their approach to the Scriptures and what Paul taught them. In Revelation 2:2, the Christians in the church at Ephesus challenged those who claimed to be Apostles, and found them to be liars.

I think the fact that we have a mindset to challenge “authority,” if something doesn’t seem right, is in the spirit of Abraham, Jesus and the Apostles. In these challenges to authority, if we maintain an attitude of humility, respectfulness and love, God will eventually lead us to truth. And we must hold fast to that truth to the end, which Hebrews 6:6 makes abundantly clear, in order to be **chosen**. ✧

Discernment Is Everything

by Barbara Buzzard

Without this biblical quality of **discernment**, you are putty in the hands of anyone wanting to influence you. Hebrews tells us exactly what discernment is: A training of the mind by much practice, so as to discern Truth from lies. We are told that the mature Christians are those whose “faculties [abilities] have been trained by practice to distinguish good from evil” (Heb. 5:14).

It is a rather shocking thing and not commonly understood that it is evil to be deceived: “But wicked people and imposters will go from bad to worse, deceiving others and **being deceived**” (2 Tim. 3:16). We must accept what Scripture defines as sin, or in this case, wicked. It is good to remember that “The LORD loves those who hate evil” (Ps. 97:10). That striking Truth should frame our attitude and thinking about deception, i.e. it is to be avoided as sin.

The very opposite of discernment is deception. How do you know you are being deceived if you are deceived? Scripture guides us in this by speaking of “the love of the truth” (2 Thess. 2:10). In 1 Corinthians 13:6 biblical love “rejoices with the truth.” Truth is to be discerned with that in mind. What is biblical love? Biblical love rejoices and recognizes when Truth is spoken. Which is to say that biblical love has *discerned* the Truth.

Love of the Truth could hardly be over-emphasized since it is what will *save* us. The positive side of this is exceedingly wonderful. We must work very hard to avoid the negative — *perishing* because of refusal to love the Truth (2 Thess. 2:10). The way of evil that looks like love

must be discerned. The staggering importance of Truth is seen in the Psalm in which God says that “He will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with His Truth” (Ps. 96:13).

Loving the Truth allows for no ambivalence, no halting between two views. “How long will you go limping [halting] with two different opinions?” (1 Kings 18:21). No compromise and no backpedaling. Biblical love cannot bless both or all sides. Loving the Truth would necessitate the *recognition* of Truth. Discernment then would have to precede the love of the Truth. We like to see ourselves as Bereans, but do we actually *employ* truth-seeking principles and do the hard (sometimes gut-wrenching) work of ascertaining what is true — “to see if these things be so”?

The Apostle John gives us a valuable piece of advice: “Dear friends, do not believe everyone who claims to speak by the Spirit. You must test them to see if the spirit they have comes from God. For there are many false prophets in the world” (1 John 4:1).

This Was Not What God Intended

We are not *meant* to be deceived. We are *meant* to *discern* lies. In fact, what good are we if we cannot do so? At that point, we are useless. We are *meant* to discern any deviation from the truths of Scripture, especially the slow drifting which happens without our awareness. We are *meant* to discern the half-truths which all too often go by unchallenged. A half-truth, of course, leads to a whole lie. “Is not this thing in my right hand a fraud?” (Isa. 44:20). Other translations use the word “lie,” but since fraud is so topical in the news these days, it seems to fit. *Is this just flim-flam?*

Since we live in a world of lies and deception, the ability to detect these lies is a major difference separating the foolish from the wise. *Thinking* is the non-negotiable companion to discernment; perhaps we should say *strenuous* thinking. We are advised rather sternly: “Do not think like everybody else” (Isa. 8:11).

“What differentiates the remnant from the great majority of the masses is the remnant’s *ability to think, to discern*, to see through the misconceptions, disinformation, falsehoods and *deceptions* of the day — something the great majority simply cannot do. The remnant also have a hatred of evil — evil which the great majority cannot even comprehend is

evil, let alone muster the character or energy to oppose.”¹

We are often warned in Scripture to “watch out,” “make sure,” “beware”; there is danger ahead. As wise, discerning individuals we will adjust our course and perceive the attempts to derail us, to throw us off course. We must not be ignorant of the fact that by nature we love darkness: “People loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil” (John 3:19). We would do well to recognize and fight against our own proclivity to evil. The “seeds of deception” are found in our own hearts. Lies are devastating, and no less devastating when told by ourselves to ourselves. Failure to acknowledge our sins is dangerous in the extreme.

At least seven times in Scripture we are told, “See to it that you are not deceived.” We are faced today with more delusions than ever, and those behind those delusions are working harder than ever to “see to it” that we are deceived. If ever the wool was pulled over our eyes, if ever we were duped, if ever there was a worldwide deception — it would be that of saying that the baby in the womb is only a fetus and we have the “right” to kill it!

How have we turned our backs on truth? And lost the Bible in church?

1) We have lost the Bible and its crisp edges. Deceit, detours and substitutions are everywhere. We hang onto the idea of church, but we re-imagine it as bland, an institution that can set us up for the week and help things to go well. But we do not imagine it as a corrective or disciplinary guide to practice the constraints of Scripture. Unless the church’s life is rooted and nourished in the Bible, it has no possibility of being Christian.

“The fact that the Bible is being lost in the church is therefore a crisis of the most serious proportions. We are in danger of losing all relationship to the only God there is, which means, of course, that we are in danger of chaos and finally, total death.”²

2) We believe falsehoods such as “the gospel is not in the gospels” (C.S. Lewis). We have lost Jesus’ beloved Gospel of the Kingdom and replaced it with only the one half to do with Jesus’ death on the cross.

¹ “McAlvaney Intelligence Advisor,” emphasis added.

² Elizabeth Achtemeier, *The Old Testament and the Proclamation of the Gospel*, p. 15.

Yet the Apostles' "outlook on the future was based upon their central understanding of Jesus as the Messiah, the ruler of the future Kingdom of God whose power was manifested in advance in Jesus' ministry. By what possible logic can we give up the hope which was 'the essential characteristic of apostolic Christianity,' and still claim to be Christians?"³

3) We are tempted to believe the very mistaken idea that we are living in the Kingdom, that this worldly chaos with all its suffering and heinous evil is the Millennium. Along with that we would have to shut down our brains in order to entertain the idea that Satan has been imprisoned and is currently unable to deceive anyone (Rev. 20:3). One would have to shut down reason and what we see in plain sight, in order to accept this.

4) We have been deceived into thinking that compassion means tolerance and acceptance. It does not. Our acceptance or tolerance of sin is mistakenly and tragically seen as compassion, but in fact the sinner is often hurt by our failure to confront him. Genuine compassion never enables sin. A Christian who has courage will attempt to show a sinner his sin and help him to conquer it; that is his moral obligation.

5) We have been lulled into thinking that silence is acceptable before God. Silence does not honor God. God wants not just our good deeds but our defense of His Truth. He wants the involvement and passion of our *minds*. It is the culture that values conformity; our God does not.

There is a two-fold occurrence of discernment in Scripture. One is that which everyone must strive for and practice; the other is the *gift of discernment* as listed in 1 Corinthians 12:10, granted to someone marked out for special gifting. This gift of God through His holy spirit is that ability to discern between good and bad, and to make a judgment as to what is true and what is not. In our world, this gift is a much needed attribute, and if this gift is not exercised we will suffer a massive distortion of Truth.

First Things First

Start speaking the Truth to yourself as an absolute essential. As we are easily deceived, it might help if we were to admit that fact to ourselves. In that admission we might see that we have to actively seek, search, and pursue Truth. God is not and cannot be deceived; even the hidden things of the heart are open to Him. Being deceived renders you worthless. Some translations of Titus 3:3 render "deceived" as "led astray." That is an accurate graphic picture to hold in one's mind when being tempted to diverge from the faith of the prophets, the disciples and the earliest believers, and most importantly Jesus, who we claim to follow. We have most certainly been led astray unless we believe what Jesus believed, which is the faith of Jesus.

We do not like to admit that we have been deceived. In fact, a quote attributed to Mark Twain puts it this way: "It's easier to fool people than to convince them that they've been fooled."

The danger of deception is a major theme that Scripture warns us about from the prophets to Jesus and his disciples.

Red Alert

We have been authorized, sanctioned by God to know His Truth. This necessitates discernment which will allow us to speak words of wisdom. The alternative is ghastly: *words without wisdom*.

We must pray daily to be delivered from deceit, but then we must do the very hard work of determining or discerning the Truth. *It is easier not to do so*. The added imposition of having to study, to determine, to measure and weigh truth alongside error is required of us in order to meet God's standards and His approval. We have a moral duty to do so. *There is no such thing as effortless Christianity*.

The possibility of being deceived is a matter of great urgency. "Satan, who uses all power, signs, lying wonders, and every kind of wicked deception" against us will deceive multitudes (2 Thess. 2:9-10). And what ought our response to be? We could do no better than the example of Timothy and his fellow workers: "We work hard and suffer much in order that people will believe the Truth" (1 Tim. 4:10).

Let us hold tightly to the Hope we claim we have. ✧

³ Anthony Buzzard, *Who Is Jesus?* p. 31

The Gospel of John the Baptist

by Carlos Xavier

The noted church historian Will Durant observed that Jesus' "starting point was the Gospel of John the Baptist, which itself went back to Daniel and Enoch."⁴

Durant's observation is important because the Gospel Jesus preached did not suddenly appear in a vacuum. The Kingdom message itself goes back to the Hebrew prophets. For example, Daniel uses the word "Kingdom" nearly 20 times, and his visions repeatedly concern the coming Kingdom/Nation of God which will finally replace the kingdoms/nations of this present evil age (Dan. 2:37-45; 7:9-14; Rev. 11:15).

The same is true of the apocalyptic message known simply as the coming Day of the LORD (Zeph. 2:1-4; cp. Isa. 13:9; Mal. 4:1). This Day is repeatedly described as "at hand" or drawing "near," but not already here. The prophetic vision is primarily presented as a literal, future event that will be worldwide when the Messiah appears to establish God's Kingdom. This remains the great Christian hope.

The ministry of John the Baptist follows directly in the footsteps of those prophets. His appearance and lifestyle stood in stark contrast to many of the religious leaders centered in Jerusalem at the time. His clothing and manner of life not only identified him as a wilderness prophet but were a throwback to the prophets of old (Zech. 13:4), especially Elijah (2 Kings 1:8), in whose "spirit and power" the angel said John would come (Luke 1:17). As Jesus later told the crowd, "If you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who was to come" (Matt. 11:14).

John's mission, however, was to prepare the way for the Lord Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth. For the New Testament writers, Jesus is the Son of Man figure seen in Daniel's visions as the supreme, unique human agent of the one God, the "Ancient of Days." Jesus is also identified as the prophet Moses spoke about in Deuteronomy 18, as well as the "messenger of the covenant" of Malachi 3:1. This makes Jesus greater than all the prophets and kings who came before him, including David and Moses. The same applies to his cousin John, whom Jesus "outranks" because he is the one "more powerful"

than John (Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:7) — not because John 1:15, 30 teaches that Jesus was *literally* alive before John was born!

In Matthew 3:10 John proclaims that "the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." In verse 12 he adds:

"His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will thoroughly clear his threshing floor; and he will gather his wheat into the barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

This coming judgment belongs ultimately to that yet-future Day, the Day of the LORD God (Isa. 13:9; Zeph. 1:15; 2:1-3; Mal. 4:1). John draws upon familiar Old Testament prophetic imagery of the wicked being consumed like wood, chaff, or refuse thrown into a fiery furnace. Compare Psalm 21:9, where the enemies of God are made "as a fiery furnace" in the time of His anger. It's no wonder that this verse is one of the most used by the New Testament writers.

But the bad news of judgment gives way to the wonderful Good News, the Gospel of God, drawing heavily on the great prophetic announcement of Isaiah 40:1-11. These foundational Kingdom prophecies remain largely forgotten, ignored, or reinterpreted by much of amillennial, preterist, and "Kingdom Now" theology — false developments owing much to later so-called "church fathers" like Augustine.

Although Paul says in Galatians 3:23-29 that there was a time "before the faith came," meaning before Messiah and his New Covenant Kingdom Gospel, the transition had already begun with John the Baptist. John's mission was to prepare the people for the coming Messiah by announcing the approaching Kingdom. John therefore marks the paradigm shift between the Old Covenant Law and Prophets and the proclamation of the Gospel of the Kingdom under the New Covenant, by which Christians are now called to live.

Jesus himself bears witness to this in Luke 16:16 when he says that "the Law and the Prophets were **until John**; since that time the Gospel about the Kingdom of God is being preached." Some translations render this as the Law and Prophets being "in force until John." The same transition appears in Matthew 11:7-15, where Jesus places

⁴ *The Story of Civilization: Caesar and Christ: A History of Roman Civilization and of Christianity from Their Beginnings to A.D. 325.*

John at the crossroads between the Old Covenant era and the Christian Kingdom proclamation era — not, as is so often assumed, treating the cross alone as the sole dividing line between the two covenants.

John's baptism ministry therefore marked the decisive beginning of the transition away from the Law of Moses toward the New Covenant Law of Messiah (Gal. 6:2; 1 Cor. 9:21). His "baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" strikingly announced divine forgiveness outside the normal sacrificial activity of the Jerusalem Temple. Although John's appearance did not formally abolish the Law, the Prophets, or the Temple system, his ministry unmistakably pointed toward the New Covenant order in which those Old Covenant institutions would no longer stand at the center of God's ultimate Kingdom plan.

The Messiah then brings the promised power of the holy spirit, and commissions his followers to continue making disciples and baptizing them. Thus the movement from the prophets, to John, to Jesus, and finally to the church forms one continuous Kingdom-Gospel story, culminating in the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19-20.

The Gospel of John the Baptist was never a message about "going to heaven when you die." Rather, just as the prophets had announced before him and Jesus proclaimed after him, John's Gospel concerned the coming Kingdom of God on a restored earth — not another Gospel, but the same Gospel Jesus later commissions the church to continue preaching "to the end of the age," that is, until his Parousia. Anthony Buzzard notes in his footnote to Matthew 28:20 (onegodtranslation.com):

"The Great Commission, the essence of Christianity, involves 'the obedience of faith' (Rom. 1:5; 16:26; Heb. 5:9), that is, obedience to all the words of Jesus (Jn. 12:44-50; and the subsequent words revealed to Paul and other Apostles). Included in obedience to Jesus is of course his command that we 'Listen...the Lord our God is one Lord' (Mk. 12:29), and that we respond intelligently to that Shema, and with repentance to his opening command that we 'believe the Gospel of the Kingdom' (Mk. 1:14-15). When Jesus comes, the saints of all the ages will be caught up to meet Jesus in the air and from there escort him to the earth to which he is returning to rule on the throne of David in Jerusalem. There is no such event as a so-called *pre-Tribulation* coming of Jesus. There is only one single future Second Coming of the Messiah. *By one*

single process, all true believers will be enabled to be "with the lord" (1 Thess. 4:17) — 'thus,' and by no other means. Until the Second Coming at the end of the age, the Church is to be urgently occupied with the Great Commission. The "end of the age" in Matthew occurs five times (13:39, 40, 49; 24:3 and here). It is positively never a reference to AD 70! It marks the same future event, the return of Jesus to rule on earth in his Kingdom, in each case." ✧

More on the Assyrian Antichrist by Anthony Buzzard

Question:

"After reading your article 'The Assyrian in Messianic Prophecy' (July), I have more understanding about 'The King of the North' and 'The King of the South' in Daniel 11, but I still have questions. My main question has to do with geography. If the old Assyrian Empire was where Iraq and Iran are now, then they seem to be more *east* of Jerusalem/Israel than *north*. Why is the Assyrian called 'the king of the north'?"

Answer:

See Zephaniah 2:13 which equates the north with Assyria: "He will stretch out His hand against **the north** and eliminate **Assyria**."

Also the *Pulpit Commentary* on this verse: "The north, represented by Assyria...Though this country lay to the northeast of Palestine, its armies attacked from the north, and it is generally represented as a northern power. Its destruction was foretold (Isaiah 10:12; Ezekiel 31:11; Nahum 1:14, etc.)."

Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary*: "It is true that this kingdom was not to the north, but to the north-east, of Judah; but inasmuch as the Assyrian armies invaded Palestine from the north, it is regarded by the prophets as situated in the north."

See also Isaiah 14:31 and Jeremiah 1:14; 4:6.

Views from the Church Fathers

The church father **Victorinus** (died 303 AD) refers "Assyria" in Micah 5:5 to the Antichrist:

"He previously says by the prophet: 'Then there shall be peace for our land, when there shall arise in it seven shepherds and eight attacks of men; and

they shall encircle **Assur [Assyria],’ that is, Antichrist**, ‘in the trench of Nimrod,’ Micah 5:5-6” (*Commentary on the Apocalypse*, ch. 7).

A Latin church father, **Lactantius** (c. 240-320 AD), clearly expected the Antichrist to arise in **Syria**:

“Another king shall arise out of **Syria**, born from an evil spirit...He will constitute and call himself God, and will order himself to be worshipped as the Son of God; and power will be given him to do signs and wonders...Then he will attempt to destroy **the temple of God**, and persecute the righteous people; and there will be **distress and tribulation**, such as there never has been from the beginning of the world” (*Divine Institutes*, book 7, chapter 17).

In chapter 16 Lactantius speaks of this tyrant arising “from the extreme boundaries of the **northern region**.”

In Daniel 11 and 12 it seems clear that Antiochus is a “type” of the yet future tyrant. Antiochus was a Syrian king.

Irenaeus (c. 150-195 AD) also expected a future 3 ½-year tribulation and a rebuilt temple:

“For three years and six months, during which time, when he [antichrist] comes, he will reign over the earth. Of whom also the Apostle Paul again, speaking in the second Epistle to the Thessalonians, and at the same time proclaiming the cause of his advent, thus says, ‘And then shall the wicked one be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will slay with the spirit of his mouth’” (2 Thess. 2:8).

Irenaeus sees the antichrist, not just Antiochus, in the eighth chapter of Daniel, and quotes Daniel 9:27 as a prophecy of the final reign of the antichrist for half of the final seven years: “In the midst of the week, the sacrifice and libation shall be taken away, and the abomination of desolation brought into the temple...Three years and six months constitute the half-week” (*Against Heresies*, Book 5, ch. 25).

The seventieth “week” or “seven” (years) of Daniel 9 was seen as future and close up to the Second Coming by the earliest church fathers who wrote in detail on prophecy. James Montgomery notes that this “apocalyptic” understanding of the last period of seven years **is the one found in the Gospels and Paul**, and it is adopted by Irenaeus and Hippolytus (*International Critical Commentary, Daniel*, p. 394, 398). ✧

Comments

- “As I am reading your fascinating book *The Amazing Aims and Claims of Jesus*, I examined your interesting point about ‘*nephesh*’ (soul) and the selective/deceptive renderings in many translations of Genesis 2 verses 7 and 19.

Gen. 2:7: “The man became a **living soul**.”

Gen. 2:19: “The Lord God formed every animal of the field...and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. Whatever the man called each **living soul**, that was its name.”

The Hebrew is the same (*nephesh*), but many translations have ‘living soul’ in verse 7 for man, but ‘living creature’ in verse 19 for animals. Only a few English translations render *nephesh* fairly and openly for both humans and animals as ‘living soul.’ I thought this might be a fun fact.” — *Belgium*

- “I appreciate the July article, ‘Yes, Lord, I trust... but Wait: Learning to Trust God in Real Life’ by Jennie Wyeth, Australia. All who desire to live a godly way in Messiah Jesus are bound to suffer persecution (2 Tim. 3:12). There never seems to be as much support for truth as for error. I learned from this article to keep on trusting our generous Father in all our circumstances. The Apostle Paul’s advice to Timothy must be kept in our hearts: ‘And so you, my child, be strong in the grace which is found in Messiah Jesus...Share with me in suffering as a soldier of Messiah Jesus’ (2 Tim. 2:1-3). Whatever the outcome, the disciples experienced great difficulties. Under all such things they never thought of surrendering even for a moment. My prayer for all of us is that we would indeed rejoice and give thanks for everything in our lives. Even the things that seem unbearable have lessons to be learned, and we need to thank God for them. Thank God when we are hurt and things don’t happen the way we think they should, for the lessons learned are far more valuable than any loss we may experience.” — *Philippines*

- “I have spent the last few days digesting your book *The Amazing Aims and Claims of Jesus*, and I have to say that it opened my eyes on much of my upbringing in the Congregational and Lutheran churches, as well as exposure for about 10 years to Sabbath-keeping groups. There is lots to consider, and I appreciate the opportunity to learn.” — *Connecticut*