Focus on the Kingdom

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What Is Christianity?

by Anthony Buzzard

Simply put, Christianity is the practice of following and obeying Jesus, starting with his first command to repent and believe in the coming Kingdom of God.

In Western culture we've become so accustomed to seeing Jesus deified in classical artwork, evangelical proclamations, and church dogma that we forget he was really a human being. Jesus was a man who fully expressed the character of his Father. He was a man raised in the faith and tradition of Israel — a faith which most Christians today overlook when forming their theological positions. Imagine that: Today Christians all over the world ignore the faith and core teachings of the very Messiah they claim to be following. Instead we want to explore what Jesus actually taught and believed, and the importance of understanding Christianity in its proper first-century Jewish context.

Reminder 1: Jesus Is Still a Jew

Jesus professed belief in the one God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob — not the Triune God of Christianity's post-biblical church councils.

Here's a suggestion: that we all agree that Jesus was a Jew, Mary was a Jew, and therefore his preaching has a Jewish background. Jesus believed that the true God of the world is a single Person (with a capital P), not a triune "essence."

The world is currently divided into huge blocks of competing world religions. You have a billion Christians fragmented into thousands of denominations unable to agree. Then you have the Muslims, passionate about Islam. And you have the Jewish people struggling for their land in the Middle East and believing — some of them at least — that the Messiah has yet to come.

What distinguishes biblical, New Testament Christianity from both of those systems is the belief that the Messiah has come and has died. Islam actually does believe that Jesus of Nazareth was a messiah; that he was born by miracle in Mary. But not that he's the Son of God. They're nervous about saying that God could have a son because they're so afraid of the Trinity. But they need not be afraid of the Trinity — that's not in the Bible. God is still one Person.

So it's impossible, until we get some point of commonality here, for these differing world religions to come together in sensible dialogue. The art of getting unity would be simplicity: God is one single Person. That's an easy idea. Jesus, if you read him in Mark 12:29 when asked about the greatest commandment — notice, the greatest commandment of all — simply gives the right Jewish (and therefore, in his case, Christian) answer. He, being the Christ, the teacher of Christianity, answers:

"Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one single Lord."

That is so simple and so easy.

This idea that God is one, as Jesus clearly said, would bring the Jews, the Islamic people, and Christians who love the Bible into some sort of free dialogue. This would be a beginning of trying to remedy the present chaos, friction, and agony that now separates us all into different camps.

So what would be the simple form of the faith? Belief in God as one single Person — in Hebrew, one single Lord — not three or two.

Reminder 2: Jesus Proclaimed the Gospel about the Kingdom

The Gospel which was the purpose for which Jesus was commissioned is not only about Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection, as modern Christians propose. It is firstly about the Kingdom of God as the fulfillment of God's covenant with Abraham.

Look at Luke 4:43. If Jesus had been asked, essentially, "What do you do for a job? What is your motivation?" The answer is clear:

"God sent me to announce the Gospel about the Kingdom of God. That's my commission."

Or Mark 1:14-15, where Jesus' first command is: "Repent" — that is, change your mind, get your life onto a new track, reorient yourself in a new

direction — "and believe the Gospel about the Kingdom of God," which, according to Jesus, is God's own Gospel that comes from heaven.

Don't forget that the Gospel *is* Christianity. This is the faith. If you don't define the Gospel right, you're not defining Christianity.

Here's the point we're raising: when Jesus preached the Gospel, he did not speak about his death and resurrection. He didn't come into Galilee saying, "I'm going to die for your sins and be raised." In fact, only in the very last section of his ministry — let's say in the last half-year of a possible three-and-a-half-year ministry — did he even raise the issue of his death (privately with his Apostles). And when he told the Apostles, they didn't believe it. Indeed, they didn't believe in his death and resurrection even when he was resurrected.

The logical point here, which is so important, is that Jesus cannot have been preaching the Gospel about the death, burial, and resurrection of himself. He didn't. And yet the Bible says on page after page that he was preaching the Gospel. Was Jesus a miserable failure? Did he fail to preach the Gospel? Obviously not. He is the preacher of the Gospel, and it's about the Kingdom.

So then the question is: what is the Kingdom?

The Hebrew Bible — that 75% of your Bible that Jesus read from in the synagogue — is an important foundation in terms of Abraham. Paul calls this Christian faith that I'm describing here "the faith of Abraham." Abraham is said to be the father of the faithful (Rom. 4:16). Indeed, the Gospel was preached ahead of time to Abraham (Gal. 3:8). That's a brilliant insight.

Simply put, Abraham was promised **progeny** — that's descendants, ultimately the Messiah and his followers (spiritual progeny). He was promised **prosperity** or blessing in the long term, and he was promised **property** — land. So with that in mind we can say the land promise made to Abraham becomes the Kingdom of God promise in the New Testament. It doesn't matter whether you say "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the land" or "the earth" (Matt. 5:5).

Notice: nothing to do with going to heaven, sitting on a fluffy cloud talking to your friends all day. Israel, with Jerusalem as its capital, with Jesus sitting on the throne of David — that's the Gospel. That's not just (to use the long word) "eschatology." It's the Gospel. It's the beginning of the Gospel.

With the loss of that Gospel of the Kingdom, the bottom fell out of the faith. Then things went from bad to worse. Therefore the churches — the megachurches — need to be very careful that they aren't just leaving out the entirety of Jesus' preaching about the Gospel. Evangelicalism is presenting the Gospel as though Jesus didn't preach it. Yes, that's a serious mistake. Jesus is the model prototype preacher of the Gospel. He's the rabbi or teacher. "You call me teacher and lord," he said, "and you are right" (John 13:13). He taught in the Temple for hours (Matt. 26:55).

The Devil has induced many people to believe that what Jesus *taught* is not so important — that the only thing that's important is his death and resurrection. Now that's vital, but are we leaving out the whole first stage of the Gospel by our definition? That's our point to the public in this day and age. That's the challenge.

So how can we sum all this up?

Jesus, who is a supernaturally begotten human being, raised in the faith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, preached the Gospel about the Kingdom, died for the sins of the world, was resurrected by his Father, and is coming again. The one God of Israel, using Jesus as His agent, will fix the world by inaugurating a righteous government here on earth — not in heaven. Jesus obeyed his Father by staying on assignment and tirelessly preaching that Gospel of the Kingdom. He achieved a sinless life and continued to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom even after his resurrection (Acts 1:3). One day he will return to rule the world. He now invites his followers to prepare to rule on earth with him.

And what does all this mean for you?

Study Scripture and determine to define the Gospel as Jesus defined it. Never lose sight of the fact that the Jesus you follow was — and is still — a Jew, now immortalized. He submitted himself to the one God of Israel and knew nothing of a Triune God. Jesus is now poised to fulfill the promise God made to Abraham, the father of the Jewish-Christian faith.✧

Does the Bible Teach the Gift of a Private Prayer Language?

by Carlos Xavier

A popular Christian practice, drawn mainly from 1 Corinthians 14 and a few other Scriptures, treats the gift commonly called "tongues" as a language for each Christian's private prayer. But is this the biblical use of the supernatural gift of languages? The New Testament presentation of the gift — understood biblically as the supernatural ability to speak in previously unlearned languages — points primarily to two functions which seriously challenge the view of a private prayer closet language.

First, the gift functioned as a supernatural miracle connected with the outpouring of God's spirit and the confirmation of the apostolic message. Hebrews 2:3-4 does not mention languages specifically, but places "signs, wonders, various miracles, and gifts of holy spirit" among God's confirmations of the "great salvation" first announced by Jesus — the Gospel of the Kingdom (Mark 1:14–15) — and then proclaimed by those who heard him (cp. Acts 8:12).

At Pentecost, the disciples spoke in many recognized foreign languages about "the mighty works of God" (Acts 2:4–11). This fulfilled, in part, Joel's promise of the spirit being poured out in "the last days" (Acts 2:16–18; Joel 2:28–32).

The same miraculous sign later provided clear evidence that Gentiles had been accepted by God without first becoming circumcised in the flesh in order to keep the Law of Moses. When Cornelius and his household received the spirit, Jewish believers witnessed them "speaking in languages and magnifying God" (Acts 10:44-46). Peter later appealed to this event as evidence that God had given the Gentiles the same gift received "at the beginning" (Acts 11:15-18; cp. Acts 15:7-9).

Second, Paul's overriding concern is that spiritual gifts build up the church. This theme controls 1 Corinthians 12 to 14. The manifestation of the spirit is given "for the benefit of all" (1 Cor. 12:7), and Paul repeatedly insists that speech in the church must become intelligible if it is to benefit others (14:5-12, 26). That is why translation is crucial. Without a translator, the speaker must remain silent in the church (14:28).

The whole of 1 Corinthians 14 plainly concerns the public Christian gathering: "in the church" (v. 19), "If the whole church is gathered…" (v. 23), and "When you come together…" (v. 26). Paul's concern is whether what is spoken benefits those present. Thus, when verse 2 says that the person speaking in another language "speaks not to people but to God because no one understands him," Paul is not establishing a private prayer practice. (In one's private prayer closet there are no other people to understand or not!) Instead, he immediately contrasts that speech with prophecy, which builds up, encourages and consoles others (v. 3-5). His solution is translation, "so that the church may be built up" (v. 5).

The same applies to verse 4. Paul says that "one who speaks in another language builds himself up," but he does not make self-edification the governing purpose of the gift. His point is that prophecy is more useful in the church because it benefits everyone. That principle had already been stated in 1 Corinthians 12:7.

Some also appeal strongly to 1 Corinthians 14:14-15, which shows that the gift could be used in prayer. But that does not establish a *private* prayer language whose purpose is to bypass the understanding of the church. Notice that the context is the public benefit of "all," not just the individual, in verses 16-17 and 19. Verse 16 says, "If you give thanks in the spirit, how can ungifted people say 'Amen' after your prayer of thanks, since they do not know what you said?" Obviously there are no other people in your private prayer closet! That hardly supports the idea that unintelligibility itself is spiritually valuable. Paul wants what is spoken in the church to become understandable so that others can participate, learn, say "Amen," and be built up.

Others argue from verse 18 that because Paul says, "I speak in languages more than all of you," he must have meant primarily in private prayer. But the text never says that. Paul was a travelling Apostle who moved through different regions. We are simply not told where, when or how often he exercised the gift. To make verse 18 proof of a habitual private prayer practice goes beyond what Paul actually states.

Lastly, verse 28 is also frequently cited, but again Paul does not say, "Go home and pray privately in tongues." His explicit instruction is that without translation the speaker must remain silent in the church. Thus, "speak to himself and to God"

should not be made to say the gift was for private prayer.

The claim that every Christian can nevertheless possess a private form of the gift also has to contend with 1 Corinthians 12:30:

"Do all speak in languages? Do all interpret (translate)?"

The expected answer is clearly **No**.

Some say that Paul is referring only to the public not private use of the gift, but Paul himself never makes that distinction. That view has to be read into the text as opposed to being taken from what the text actually says.

Acts 2 also provides the clearest description of the gift: recognizable human languages (v. 8, 11). Nothing in 1 Corinthians requires us to turn the Corinthian gift into meaningless speech. Paul himself says:

"There are many different languages in this world, and none of them is without meaning. If I do not understand a language, I will be a foreigner to those who speak it, and they will be foreigners to me" (1 Cor. 14:10-11).

Once again, the problem is not the meaning of the speech but lack of understanding. That is why the speaker should pray to translate (v. 13), or another person should provide the translation (v. 27-28).

Paul also calls languages a "sign for unbelievers" in verses 21-22 and quotes Isaiah 28:11-12, where foreign speech forms part of God's judgment upon unbelieving Israel. This passage again places the gift in the public sphere of meaningful foreign speech functioning as a supernatural sign.

Ephesians 6:18 and Jude 20 do not change the picture. Both speak of praying "in spirit," but neither mentions foreign languages. To make "praying in the spirit" a technical synonym for "praying privately in tongues" assumes the very point that still needs to be proved.

Romans 8:26 is very clear. "Groanings which cannot be expressed in words" cannot possibly mean languages, which are words! Paul describes God's spirit helping believers in their weakness; he does not say that they therefore begin speaking in another language.

The biblical emphasis therefore runs largely in the opposite direction from the modern practice of a universal private prayer using the gift. Paul continually stresses understanding, translation, instruction, order, and the edification of others.

None of this denies that the genuine gift existed, that it could be used in prayer, praise and thanksgiving, or that Paul himself exercised it. He explicitly says, "Do not prohibit speaking in languages" (1 Cor. 14:39). The issue is what Scripture actually establishes.

The book of Acts defines the gift as people supernaturally speaking meaningful languages they had not learned.

At Pentecost no translator was needed because members of the international audience already understood their own languages (Acts 2:6-11).

In Corinth, Paul demands that translation is required because the church did not necessarily understand what was being spoken.

And 1 Corinthians 14 does not establish a separate, universal, unintelligible "private prayer language" available to every Christian. That interpretation goes beyond what the text plainly says.✧

A Close Look at Daniel 9:26-27: The Antichrist's Reign of Terror

by Anthony Buzzard

A flood of light has been thrown on the famous "70 weeks" prophecy of Daniel 9 by the German expositor, Carl Friedrich Keil, in the celebrated *Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament*. Keil was professor of languages as well as biblical exegesis. He believed that Daniel wrote genuine prediction. A detailed analysis of the whole of the 70 "sevens" or "weeks" prophecy is important for an understanding of Matthew 24 (Jesus' Olivet prophecy, the "anchor of prophecy") and the book of Revelation. Both these sections of Scripture draw heavily on the material revealed to Daniel. Jesus and Paul assume that we recognize that Daniel provides the basic outline of events destined to happen just before the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom at Jesus' return. In this study we concentrate on the activity of the wicked "ruler who is to come" (Dan. 9:26).

The Antichrist

Keil begins by pointing out that the "ruler who is to come" is a leader "whose coming is known, of whom Daniel has heard that he will come to destroy the people of God" (*Commentary*, p. 362). Does Daniel elsewhere speak of such an evil tyrant of the last days? It is well known that he does. In Daniel

7:8 he had already described "another little horn, possessing eyes like a man and a mouth uttering arrogant things." This evil person "will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One. He will intend to make alterations in times and in law [inaugurate a new 'Messianic' era?]; and the saints will be given into his hand for **a time, times and half a time**" (Dan. 7:25).

This time period is taken up again in Revelation 12:14, where it is defined as 1260 days or about **three and a half years** (12:6). Revelation 13:5 reveals that "the Beast" will operate for **42 months**. The same period of persecution under the Antichrist is described in Daniel 12:11 as **1290 days**, to be dated from the setting up of the Abomination of Desolation (Dan. 11:31; cp. Matt. 24:15).

The Little Horn of Daniel 8

In Daniel 8:9-12 more is said about the final monster of evil. He is to be "a small horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south and the east and toward the Beautiful Land. It grew up to the stars of heaven and caused some of the host and some of the stars to fall to the earth, and it trampled them down. It even magnified itself to be equal with the Commander of the host; and it removed the regular sacrifice from Him, and the place of the sanctuary was thrown down. And on account of the transgression the host will be given over to the horn along with the regular sacrifice; and it will fling truth to the ground and perform its will and prosper."

Further details follow in Daniel 8:23. This tyrant is to arise "*in the latter time*" of the Syrian kingdom which arose out of the divisions of the Greek kingdom of Alexander the Great. Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown are right to insist that the reference to the "'latter time of their kingdom when the transgressors are come to the full'...does not hold good of the time of Antiochus [164 BC], but of the closing times of the Christian era" (*Commentary* on Dan. 8:23). This is confirmed by the very clear time markers of 8:17, 19: "The vision pertains to the time of the end...the final period of indignation...the appointed **time of the end**."

This data clearly shows that this eighth chapter takes us to the time of the end of the age, just as Daniel's other prophetic chapters do. Antiochus IV Epiphanes did not reign at the "*acherit*" (the closing days) of the Syrian dynasty. He lived a little past the middle of the Syrian period**.** A major mistake of much traditional exposition of Daniel has been to limit chapter 8 to history, when it has in fact a clear reference to the times just preceding the Kingdom of God to be inaugurated at Jesus' return.

Of this end-time tyrant Gabriel says: "A king will arise, insolent and skilled in intrigue. His power will be mighty, but not by his own power, and he will destroy to an extraordinary degree and prosper and perform his will; he will destroy mighty men and the people of the saints. Through his shrewdness he will cause deceit to succeed by his influence; he will magnify himself in his heart, and he will destroy many while they are at ease. He will even oppose the Prince of princes [i.e. Jesus], but he will be broken without human agency. And the vision of the evenings and mornings is true. But keep the vision secret, for it pertains to many days in the future" (Dan. 8:23-26).

The Same Evil Prince of Daniel 9:26

With this information in mind, we proceed to Daniel 9:26 where we again find this ultimate evil ruler on the rampage, destroying the sanctuary and God's people. "The people of a prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And **his end** will come like a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined."

In the clause "and **his** end will come like a flood," Keil points out most helpfully that the Hebrew suffix "his" "refers simply to the hostile prince, whose end is here emphatically placed over against his coming." Confirmation that this is the most natural rendering may be found in the *Jewish Publication Society Translation of the OT*, *The* (Jewish) *Soncino Commentary, The International Critical Commentary*, the CJB, NABRE, NET, as well as the NASV margin.

Keil maintains that "preconceived views as to the historical interpretation of the prophecy lie at the foundation" of some translations. They have not wished to render the text "**his** end will come like a flood," because Titus, to whom they thought this ought to refer, did *not* come to his end in AD 70. However, grammatically and naturally the suffix "his" on the word "end" refers back to its nearest masculine antecedent, the evil prince (and not to the city or sanctuary). The word order of the Hebrew appears as follows: "The city and sanctuary will be destroyed by the people of a prince who is to come; and his end will come like a flood." Keil concludes after surveying all the evidence that "there remains nothing else than to apply the suffix ['his'] to the prince" — *his* end will come like a flood of

judgment. The evil leader will perish at the end of a military campaign. He will be suddenly destroyed as in a flood. Now Jesus spoke of the judgment at his Second Coming as a deluge parallel to the cataclysm brought on the world in Noah's day (Matt. 24:39).

The Final Seven Years of This Age

Daniel 9:26 then states that "to **the end** there will be war." Keil is again logical and helpful: The end "is the end of the period in progress, the seventy sevens, and corresponds to 'the end of all things' in Dan. 7:26 [NASV margin] and 12:13, 'the end of the days.'" Keil concludes that "to the end there will be war" means "*War shall continue during the whole of the last seven*" (*Comm*. p. 364). The detail of the translation is critically important. Not only does the evil prince come to his end (Titus did not in AD 70), but war will be a feature of the last — the seventieth — "seven" of years. But no war occurred in ca. AD 27-34. The system which places the seventieth "seven" in about AD 27-34 cannot be made to fit with the data presented by Daniel 9:26. Nor will it fit the events of AD 70. It is to the future end of the age to which the revelation points.

The Translation of Daniel 9:27

Verse 27 opens with the personal pronoun "he": "**He** will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.'" Keil shows that this "he" refers naturally and easily to the evil prince just mentioned:

"The connection much more indicates that the [evil] prince is the one who 'will confirm,' since the prince who was to come is named last, and is also the subject in the suffix of '**his** end'…Also the 'taking away of the daily sacrifice' combines itself in a natural way with the destruction of the city and the temple brought about by the prince who is to come…The reference of 'he will confirm' to the ungodly leader of an army is therefore according to the context and the parallel passages of this book which have been mentioned [i.e. 8:13, 11:31, 12:11], as well as in harmony with the natural grammatical arrangement of the passage, and it gives also a congruous sense, although by the 'prince' Titus cannot naturally be understood...Therefore the thought is this: That ungodly prince shall impose upon the mass of the people a strong covenant that they should follow him and give themselves to him as their God" (*Comm*. p. 366-367).

In the light of these facts, we must agree with Keil "that the reference of the words under consideration to the desecration of the temple before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans [70 AD] is untenable" (p. 371). Completing his analysis of Daniel 9:27, Keil concludes that it is natural to link the "desolator" of verse 27 as the same as the evil prince just mentioned. Furthermore the evil prince is also the subject of the desolation described in the latter half of verse 27, which should be rendered: "On the wings of abomination **he** [the evil ruler] comes desolating," agreeing in sense with the King James Version: "He shall make it desolate."

Keil's Version of Daniel 9:26-27

Keil's resultant version of the message of Gabriel to Daniel in 9:26-27 is as follows:

"The city, together with the sanctuary, shall be destroyed by the people of a prince who shall come, who shall find his end in the flood; but the war shall continue to the end, since destruction is irrevocably decreed. That prince shall force a strong covenant for one 'week' on the mass of the people, and during half a 'week' he shall take away the service of sacrifice, and, borne on the wings of idol-abominations [cp. Ps. 18:10, where the true God is also borne on wings], shall carry on a desolating rule, till the firmly decreed judgment shall pour itself upon him as one desolated" (*Comm*. p. 373).

The King of the North, the Assyrian, and Paul's View of the Antichrist

Students of the Bible should compare these last words of Gabriel in Daniel 9:27 with the very similar prediction of Isaiah 10:23: "For a complete destruction, one that is decreed, will the Lord of Hosts execute in the midst of the land." The same end-time language appears in Isaiah 28:22, which speaks of "a decisive destruction on all the earth." In Isaiah 10:23 the Assyrian is the object of God's judgment. Strikingly, when Paul describes the ruin of the Man of Sin (2 Thess. 2:8) he appeals to Isaiah 11:4 (the LXX has "the wicked one"), where once again it is the Assyrian (Isa. 10:24ff.) who comes under judgment.

It would be reasonable to anticipate that the Antichristian tyrant will arise in Syria, Iran, or Iraq,

the area of the ancient Assyrian empire.[1] In Daniel 11 the same evil figure is the "King of the North" and he comes to "his end" in Daniel 11:45 in the holy land, just before the resurrection (Dan. 12:2). Note also that **the Assyrian** meets his doom by being thrown into the lake of fire (Isa. 30:31-33). Historically this never happened to the ruler of Assyria.

In the New Testament it is *the Beast* whose fate is to be burned in the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20). The equation of the Assyrian of Isaiah 30 and the Beast of Revelation 13, 17 and 19 is remarkable. The final period of the tyrant's career ends precisely 1290 days after he sets up the Abomination of Desolation (Dan. 11:31, cp. 12:11). This critically important time reference should prevent commentators from trying to stretch the events of Daniel 11:31ff over centuries!

Jesus and Daniel the Prophet

All of this material was well known to Jesus, who did not believe, as so many commentators do, that the predictions of Daniel 8 and 11 were fulfilled in the career of Antiochus Epiphanes (2nd century BC). The latter did not appear at the end of the line of Syrian kings as Daniel 8:23 says the evil tyrant will. Nor did Antiochus "come to his end" in the holy land as the wicked king of Daniel 11:45 does. Nor, of course, was the tribulation instigated by Antiochus followed by the resurrection of the dead! (Dan. 12:1-2).

Moreover, the AD 70 time of trouble was not followed by the arrival of Jesus "immediately" afterwards (Matt. 24:29). There is no gap between the desolation of the Temple and the return of Jesus in power and glory (Matt. 24:15-31). Daniel's vision, though it may deal with Antiochus as a "sketch" of the future blasphemer, goes far beyond anything that happened in the 2nd century BC. This was clear to Jesus who predicted his own return in glory "**immediately after** the great tribulation" (Matt. 24:29) triggered by the setting up of the Abomination of Desolation (Matt. 24:15, 21; Dan. 11:31; 12:11).

We conclude that the events of Daniel 9:26-27 belong in the last seven years before the second coming, as predicted by Gabriel. The Abomination of Desolation is a feature of that last "seven." In Matthew 24 Jesus places the Abomination of Desolation in the future *just before his return*. Therefore Daniel's seventieth "week" must still be unfulfilled. This apocalyptic interpretation of Daniel's seventieth week is the one found in the gospels on the lips of Jesus and thus commands absolute authority. The same end-time view of the Abomination is found in the second-century writings of Irenaeus. The point we are making may be usefully summarized as follows:

Jesus puts the abominable horror in the future yet,
In Daniel's 70th week the Abomination will be set.
That the 70th week is future, therefore, let us not forget. ✧

Comments

• "Thank-you for your insightful newsletters. The October edition contains very important facts. Greg Deuble has a great collection of quotes pertaining to the Trinitarian belief. And what a collection it is! IF a Trinitarian comes face to face with that, a decision day it'll be. How helpful it would have been when I was confronted with the subject matter years ago. To the best of my knowledge, nobody was even aware of this. Good for those who are sincerely looking now. Regarding your article 'The End of the Age in 1 and 2 Thessalonians,' a good article and making the point that we are here to stay till Christ's return. The pre-tribulation rapture is the first false doctrine that I came out of." — *Canada*

• "Your October *Focus on the Kingdom* article by Greg Deuble covers the Trinity subject very well (as many of your articles also do)." — *England*

• "I thank God the Father and our lord Jesus Christ for the help that you provide through your teaching and faithful stewardship, and for making sure those seeds of Gospel truth are spread abroad. I've had some very interesting conversations since discovering your ministry. I always try to let the other person explain from Scripture and historical context the doctrine of the Trinity, but most of what is being presented is drenched with traditional dogma." — *Florida*

[1] Note that in Ezra 6:22 the area of Persia (Iran) is called Assyria.