

# Focus on the Kingdom

Volume 4 No. 2

Anthony Buzzard, editor

November, 2001

## Jesus Distinct from the One God

by Frederick A. Farley, D.D., Boston pastor (1800-1892)

What I said before of the entire Scripture holds specially true of the New Testament, that its general tenor and drift are entirely adverse to the dogma of the Supreme Deity of Jesus Christ; and express his inferiority and subordination to the Father as the Only True God.

Do you ask what I mean by the general tenor and drift of Scripture? Precisely what is meant when the phrase is applied to any other book — namely, the first, the prevailing, the obvious impression, made by a careful perusal of the whole. For instance, when one reads the Aeneid or the Iliad, no doubt it is felt that Virgil and Homer were polytheists. So in the New Testament, the first and the most obvious impression made is that our Lord is the Son of God and not God Himself; that God is one and supreme; that the doctrine of its pages is consistent and uniform throughout on this point, with that of the Old Testament.

One of the scribes asked Jesus: “Which is the first commandment of all?” and he replies in the very words of Moses: “Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is One Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy strength” (Mark 12:28-30). Accordingly, his constant allusions, his uniform habits of speech, his prayers, his whole deportment, are in perfect and unbroken sympathy with this idea and doctrine, nay with this grand paramount truth. The same may be said of the Apostles.

But, more particularly; throughout the New Testament, Christ is uniformly kept distinct or distinguished from God. If distinct, then, of course inferior — then not God Supreme. How explicit his own language! “This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3). “We have peace with God,” says Paul, “through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1). Two beings here are certainly brought into view.

Quite as explicit as his Master’s is the same Apostle’s language to Timothy: “One God, and One Mediator between God and man, the man Christ

Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5). The Apostolic benedictions at the beginning of the epistles are in corresponding form. “Grace to you from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 1:7). James begins thus: “James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ” (James 1:1). Peter says: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 1:3). John in his second epistle: “Grace to you, mercy and peace, from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, **the Son of the Father**” (2 John 3).

These are examples of what is the uniform style of the Apostolic Epistles, in which in seventeen passages this distinction is most carefully observed, and in which one Being alone is always called “God”; the other, without exception, “Lord.”

God is spoken repeatedly as being “with Christ” (John 3:2; Acts 10:38). Eleven passages in St. John’s gospel alone assert that Jesus “came from God” or “went to God” (e.g., 3:2; 8:42; 13:3). Twice in his epistles, St. Paul speaks of Christ as “the image of God” (2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15). In one he is called “the express image of God” (Heb. 1:3). In one he is said to be “in the form of God” (Phil. 2:6). Whatever these passages and expressions mean, they assuredly show distinction of being. ☩

## The God of the Bible is One Person

Churchgoers who have grown up believing that the true God is *three Persons* will be surprised (and we hope enlightened) to find out that Scripture says that God is in fact **one** Person. That One Person is the Father of the Lord Messiah, Jesus. This simple fact is stated with utmost clarity in both Testaments. None of the thousands of appearances of the word “God” in the Bible means “God the Trinity” or “the Triune God.” That is because the writers of the Bible never believed in a “Triune God,” or Godhead.

Turn to Galatians 3:20. Paul wrote: “God is One.” This cardinal doctrine originates in the famous creed of

### In This Issue

The Shema: Hear, O Israel .....	3
A Letter to a Minister about Current Events .....	4
The Good News.....	7

Israel: “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is **one Lord**” (Deut. 6:4). This is the creed which Jesus himself taught and believed. He quoted it in Mark 12:29ff. So the Jew Jesus, as Israel always had before him, believed that God is One, not two or three. Highly significant is Jesus’ announcement that belief in the One true God was the *most important* ingredient in true religion. In response to the question “What is first of all the commandments?” Jesus said, “The first of all the commandments is this: Listen, Israel, the Lord your God is one Lord” (Mark 12:28ff.). It is a proposition which we ignore at our peril.

An examination of the word “one” in a number of passages reveals that the declaration “God is One” means simply that He is one Person. Take, for example, the sentence “Abraham was one” (Ezek. 33:24) or “Abraham was one when I called him” (Isa. 51:2). Does anyone have the slightest difficulty in catching the sense of “one”? Translators have recognized that the meaning is “Abraham is one party” or “one person.” Take another example. In Ecclesiastes 4:9, 10 we read: “Two are better than one (*echad*)...If they fall the one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is one [i.e., alone] when he falls. There is not a second [person] to lift him up.” To be “one” and “a second” in these verses means of course to be “one single person” and “a second person.” In the Song of Solomon 6:9 “my dove, my perfect one is one. She is ‘the one’ (*echad*) of her mother.” In smooth English, “my dove, my perfect one, is unique. She is her mother’s only daughter” (NASV). In all these cases, one means one!

Hundreds of times in the Hebrew Bible (the OT), the word one (*echad*) means “one single.” The notion that it means more than one is one (!) of the most extraordinary pieces of misinformation ever to emerge in print in literature claiming to explain the Bible. One means one. It is the first digit when counting in Hebrew, Greek or English. One means one and not two or more! To say that one means more than one is to sink to a level of incomprehensibility parallel to saying that  $2 + 2 = 5$  or a square is a circle. In no other field than “theology” can one get away with such strange obscurity!

It is surprising that Bible readers sometimes react with perplexity when they encounter the biblical statement that “God is One.” Why should this be a problem? The Amplified Bible translates Galatians 3:20: “God is *only one person*. He was the sole party in giving the promise to Abraham, but the Law was contracted between two, God and Israel.” Only a few

verses earlier, similar language describes Jesus as “one seed” as contrasted with many. As the Amplified Bible puts it: “God does not say ‘and to seeds,’ as if referring to many persons, but ‘and to your Seed,’ obviously referring to one individual, who is Christ” (Gal. 3:16). “Christ is one” obviously means that he is one person.

Could anything be clearer than that Christ is one individual and that God is one person, one individual, one Father? “Do we not all have one Father? Has not One God created us?” (Mal. 2:10). “**God is only one Person**” (Gal. 3:20). This startling revelation could, if believed, put to rest centuries of wrangling about who God is. But few seem to be able to grasp this truth. Some search for more complicated views of God. They turn to John 10:30 where Jesus stated that he and the Father are “one.”

Our English translation does not reveal that the word “one” in *that* verse is a neuter form of the numeral “one.” It means one *thing*, one in power and will. The verse does not say that the Father and the Son are one *person*. But Galatians 3:20 and Deuteronomy 6:4 say that God is *One Person*. The word in this case is not “one thing” (neuter) but “one Person” (masculine). That one Person is the Father of Jesus. And the Father of Jesus is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Thousands upon thousands of times in the OT, that one God is designated by a singular personal pronoun. Language has no simpler or clearer way of telling us that one person is meant.

The Biblical creed is that the Father is “the only true God” (John 17:3), the “one who alone is God” (John 5:44). John 17:3 can equally be rendered “You, [Father, are] the only one who is truly God.” That, of course, means that no one else is God — not even Jesus, who is the **Son** of God, that is, the Messiah.

Psalms 110:1 defines who God is and who Jesus the Messiah is with precision. In the NT Psalm 110:1 is the most frequently cited verse from the OT. The God who speaks is “Yahweh” and His Son is addressed as “*adoni*” (“my lord” — correctly with lower case in RV, RSV, NRSV etc.), not *Adonai*, which is another word for God. Check this special word *adoni*. It will tell you who Jesus is. This form of the word “lord” is reserved in the Bible for *human* (or occasionally angelic) superiors, *as distinct from God Himself*. Jesus is that supreme human lord, but he is not God. He is a different person from his Father. God, His Father, “is only **one Person**” (Gal. 3:20).

All this was crystal clear until in post-biblical times a kind of terrorist act against the one God occurred. Theologians under the irrational influence of Greek philosophy began to speak of a “second God.”

This second God was eventually promoted to a status equal in every way with God, the Father. That was a theological disaster. It was a disaster which this magazine hopes in some small way to expose and remedy. With Jesus we propose to our readers that they begin to address the Father of Jesus as “the only one who is truly God” (John 17:3). ☩

## The Shema — Hear O Israel

by Allon Maxwell

*“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength”* (Mark 12:29 and Deut. 6:4-5).

Jesus quoted this commandment from Deuteronomy 6:4-5. When he did so, it had already been, for 1500 years, the non-negotiable starting point for recognition of the identity of the God of Israel. And no Jew familiar with the Old Testament would ever have thought that ONE meant *more* than the simple cardinal number — “ONE.” Especially, there was no recognition at all in the Jewish faith into which Jesus was born, of later human inventions such as “trinity” or “compound unity” or “uni-plurality.” Indeed, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that, since these concepts are not biblical, they must result from some fundamental failure to properly obey the commandment to “Hear!”

If Jesus says that this commandment is *the most important of all*, it deserves our full attention. We must study it prayerfully until we get it right. It is important enough to memorize it. And it is important enough to teach it to our children — diligently — until it is fixed in their hearts as firmly as it is in our own (Deut. 6:7).

Note carefully that this greatest commandment of all has three parts.

### Part 1 - The first part of the commandment says “hear.”

Hear what? Simply to pay attention to and understand the command to “hear.”

There is a lot in that single word “hear.” It implies in the strongest possible way that we must listen carefully, diligently, intelligently, fearless of any personal “consequences” of hearing properly (such as persecution or rejection). And it follows, of course, that apathy or carelessness about listening properly to this commandment from God, or refusal to listen at all, or deliberate and dishonest distortion of what we hear, in order to make what we say more “acceptable”

to others, will be barrier to our obedience to the rest of it.

By saying that it is the greatest of all commandments, Jesus has made it so fundamental to faith in the one true God of the Bible that we must make certain that we hear correctly. We cannot afford to be wrong about this greatest commandment of all.

### Jesus has made it essential to the gospel.

And when we have heard properly ourselves, we must not be reluctant to tell others what we have heard about this greatest commandment of all. If it is so important to Jesus, we should not hide this God-given light under a bushel (Matt. 5:15) for the unworthy motive of making an “easier road” for ourselves.

### Part 2 - Hear the commandment which says that God is (only) one Lord (RSV).

There is no other God apart from the one defined by Moses. This God (Yahweh, 6,728 times in the OT) says of Himself, “*I am the first and the last; besides me there is no God*” (Isa. 44:6).

And Jesus repeats the same cardinal truth in different words, when he says that *his Father* is the *only* true God (John 17:3).

So when people don’t listen properly to this second part, and instead re-invent God by making him *three-in-one*, or a “compound unity,” or some other illogical impossibility which requires us to throw our minds away, the inevitable conclusion is that, for whatever reason (either through ignorance or delusion), they fall into disobedience to the greatest commandment of all.

Only when we have intelligently grasped the fact that God is “one Lord” will we be able to “graduate” to Part 3, and truly love God as we should.

### Part 3 - Hear the commandment which tells us to love God with all our being.

This is the ultimate goal of this greatest commandment of all. The first two parts are “stepping stones” — absolute prerequisites — to our response to the third part. Without that foundation, we will not be able to know enough *about* Him to know Him personally for who He is. And if we can’t do that, we shall not be able to *love Him* enough to devote ourselves to keeping the rest of His “lesser” commandments — with all our heart, mind, soul and strength.

Jesus tells us this in John 17:3 — but with one added dimension. He says that receiving the Life of the Coming Age in the Kingdom is conditional on knowing his Father as the only true God, and knowing himself as someone else — *not* the only true God, but the Messiah sent by God.

In this verse, “*knowing*” is a stronger word than merely “*knowing about*.” Jesus also means “knowing personally” — in the personal relationship which exists between a father and his children, or between two brothers who are also “best friends.”

This greatest commandment to know that the One Lord of Israel, who is also the Father of Jesus, is the only true God, is given for good reason. It is the foundation on which true love and obedience can grow to their fullness (Eph. 3:14-21).

Caution here! Even if we do have it right, it doesn’t guarantee that we will do that. It is our responsibility to use our free will choice to exercise our heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, to love God.

**Ignorance** - is dispelled by knowledge. We get that by reading the Bible!

**Deception** - can only be cured by removing the cause of delusion. We must learn both to love the truth and to hate our sins, so that God will not send delusion (2 Thess. 2:11-12).

**Disobedience** - is cured by repentance. In this context in particular, that means repenting from the wrong motives that lead to suppression of truth, and it means acceptance of the consequences of proclaiming truth. Some of the most common of these false motivations are:

- Desire to continue in sin, which is stronger than fear of judgment (Rom. 1:18-20, 32).
- Avoidance of persecution. “Acceptance” by the majority, to “swim in their bigger pool” (Matt 13:20-21).
- Coveting a “ministry” not available to those who reject the confusion of Trinitarian creeds. “*All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me*” (Matt 4:9). ☩

### **A Letter to a Minister about Current Events, from an Anabaptist Point of View (A View We Think is in Harmony with Jesus’ Outlook)**

by David Maas

I’m encouraged at last to see a leader from the evangelical wing of the church state that the United States is not a “Christian nation.” For several reasons this is a message which needs to be declared clearly and loudly by genuine believers.

I wrote you some months ago expressing my growing view that true Christians have no business involving themselves in politics. In my opinion such activities are incompatible with the kind of discipleship demanded of believers by Jesus and are detrimental to the cause of the Gospel. The latter

reason is of particular concern. You respectfully expressed your disagreement with me. I am hoping that your views on such matters are changing. The present “crisis” in America is only confirming my position in my own mind. I’ve been quite disappointed in the public pronouncements of several evangelical leaders calling for brutal retaliation against America’s perceived enemies using tones that smack of bloodlust. How they square this with the Bible’s admonitions *to believers* against retaliation (e.g. Matt. 5 & Rom. 12) is beyond me. The relevant issue *to us* is not the political realities with which a secular state must deal, but what Jesus requires of his disciples in any given situation. “What Would Jesus Do?” is a question superficially popular with evangelicals, but one to which it seems most believers give no serious consideration when it comes to the issue of war.

The New Testament portrays the church, at least as it should be, as the true people of God, Israel reconstituted in Christ (Gal. 6:16; Phil. 3:3), the Body of Christ, the assembly of God’s people, a people set apart to God and His service. It is to be a people without the traditional boundaries of ethnicity, nationality, gender, social and economic status. We are to be *an international community* without borders and with membership defined simply as being “in Christ.” We are tasked with calling all who will hear to join this same *trans-national* community of believers. Hyper-nationalism and waging war on others cannot promote such an endeavor. They make it impossible. What are believers in China or Germany to think when “good Christianity” requires us to be American patriots? Are believers in Cuba living under a regime hostile to America required by Jesus to be super Cuban patriots? In the New Testament I find no trace of an agenda concerned with propagating any particular economic or political theory (except that of the Kingdom of God). The concern of the NT writers, based largely on their eschatological outlook, was to call out a people to and for God, not for social, political or economic reform of present nation-states. We as evangelical believers understand that the Law of God, which was holy and perfect, completely failed to change the hearts of men. Do we honestly believe that we can now do so in America via the political process and the imperfect laws of man? If we understand this, why do we waste our precious time trying to reform society and “engage the culture?” If we understand that this world system is doomed, that righteousness will not prevail until this present evil age is ended and the new one ushered in by Jesus at his “Parousia” [Second Coming], why do we continue to spend our time working in and for the

world system rather than preaching the gospel to all nations? This is completely illogical. It defies common sense.

Due generally to the government's occasional propaganda needs to invoke the name of "God," and more particularly to the efforts of far too many evangelical preachers, Christianity is identified with "western civilization" and equated with America in the minds of millions around the globe, a rather strange thought considering that Jesus was a first-century Palestinian Jew brought up in a largely Semitic society. The Crusades undertaken "in the name of Christ" have served permanently to close the minds of many to the Kingdom Gospel of Jesus Christ. The same can be said of the Catholic Inquisition and the "Christian" religious wars in Europe following the Reformation. Are we as believers not concerned that by associating the Gospel of Christ with America, American foreign policy and military interventionism, we are having a similar effect on the hearts of millions? Is this the way to win enemies for Christ? Considering the damage the American government frequently inflicts elsewhere do we really want the rest of the world to equate America (or any other particular nation) with Christianity? How does this help to open doors to the Gospel? Today there are 1.3 billion Muslims in the world. Why should they open their hearts to embrace the Gospel of Jesus Christ when in their minds America delivers bombs along with Bibles? Already the threats and pronouncements of America's leaders have exacerbated an existing human disaster in Afghanistan. How does this help the cause of Christ? What will be the result when indiscriminate bombing by American planes kills thousands of civilians in Afghanistan or Iraq? Do we really expect a father whose wife or child is killed by American bombs to love America?

For years I have found it disturbing that whenever evangelical preachers rail against America's "moral decline" they invariably bring up adultery, homosexuality, pornography and the like. Yes, these are egregious sins. But why do I hear not even a peep of protest from them about the hundreds of thousands of innocent people killed in other countries directly and indirectly by the actions of the American government? Certainly such preachers decry the horrific crime of abortion in America, but why no concern over the deaths of foreign children? Is it only murder when a child is killed *inside* the womb, or do we just not care about foreign children? Is God more upset over the less than 2% of Americans who practice homosexuality or the estimated million or so

Iraqi men, women and children who have died over the last ten years as a result of a US-enforced economic blockade? Is God more angered by sexual sins or the shedding of innocent blood?

I am not arguing for anti-Americanism or some alternative political agenda (though I find I cannot turn a blind eye to the many horrific acts committed by America over the last century). I'm attempting to demonstrate that something is seriously wrong in the thinking of far too many American evangelicals. I'm arguing for nonparticipation in politics and war, which is the political process taken to its ultimate extreme. I am advocating this first for the practical reason that such activities do damage to the gospel; they serve to close minds to the truth. Obviously dropping bombs on someone will not engender positive sentiments in response. Similarly politics creates as many enemies as friends. As practiced in western democracies politics is a game whereby competing groups work to benefit themselves at the expense of others. A farm subsidy may help the farmer but how does the taxpayer compelled to pay for it feel? When evangelical leaders ally the cause of Christ with the Republican Party, does that help acceptance of the gospel by those who perceive that Republican policies are detrimental to their own interests? Frankly many of the policies championed by Republicans and our current President will be harmful to my own family when implemented. I'm not afraid of others taking offense at my Christianity but should we offend them when there is no need? And by voting for politicians do we not incur some culpability in any evil deeds they subsequently do "on our behalf"?

I also oppose political participation and war for reasons of biblical principle. We find it convenient to use modern ideas of distinctions between the "secular and the spiritual" and individual and collective action to help us tone down the commands of Scripture. Hence "personal" retaliation is sinful and forbidden whereas "collective" revenge carried out through the secular state is perfectly acceptable. But such distinctions do not appear in Scripture, which presents Jesus' Lordship as a sovereignty extending over all things, whether above, on or below the earth. The kind of obedience and loyalty demanded of Christ's true and willing subjects is so total that it is incompatible with the kind of absolute loyalty so frequently demanded by secular states. Is this not borne out by history? Do we not understand that totalitarian governments persecute Christians not due to theological differences but because true Christians answer to an authority much higher than the state, an attitude the state simply

cannot tolerate? Properly understood the teachings of Jesus will inevitably be viewed by society and government as so “radical” as to be subversive. That’s why they killed Jesus.

I read yesterday the words of one prominent columnist referring to the “freedom we worship” in America. I like freedom as well as the next man, but “worship” it? Does not the love of country, flag and all things military so prominent in American evangelicalism border on idolatry? Do we identify ourselves first and foremost as “Christian” or “American”? We like to think that if *we* had lived under a regime like Hitler’s *we* would never have supported or participated in the government and policies of Nazi Germany. The behavior of the churches and Christians of Germany at the time argues otherwise. How many American Christians protested the incarceration of Japanese-Americans or Jehovah’s Witnesses during World War 2? Were any voices raised in protest against the deliberate firebombing of purely civilian targets in Germany and Japan by American forces in 1944 and 1945? We rightly condemned the German Luftwaffe for the London blitz but cheered on our own boys when they reduced places like Dresden, Hamburg and Tokyo to smoldering rubble. Is it not blasphemous when Christians advocate killing other human beings for whom Christ also died?

I write this in the hope that you and others will begin to teach believers correct perspectives on such matters and, over the long run, perhaps help to disassociate Christianity and the gospel of Christ from the American body politic. Again, my reasons are not political and I am not advocating anti-Americanism. But should we not look at things from the biblical perspective? America like all other nations is part of the present world order; it is a product of this present evil age. As a national unit it will not survive the return of Christ. My point is that we as believers need to spend our lives, energies and talents preaching the gospel to all nations. Anything that impedes that mission must be avoided, and equating the policies of the United States, “democracy” and the like with Christianity only serves to create more impediments to the gospel. I fear that we have only begun to see the enormous damage done to the cause of Christ by equating it with America and “western civilization.” ☩

## A Little Humor

Jesus said, “Whom do men say that I am?”

And his disciples answered and said, “Some say you are John the Baptist returned from the dead; others say Elias, or other of the old prophets.”

And Jesus answered and said, “But who do you say that I am?”

Peter answered and said, “Thou art the Logos, existing in the Father as His rationality and then, by an act of His will, being generated (eternally), in consideration of the various functions by which God is related to his creation, but only on the fact that Scripture speaks of a Father, and a Son, and a Holy Spirit, each member of the Trinity being coequal with every other member, and each acting inseparably with and interpenetrating every other member, with only an economic subordination within God, but causing no division which would make the substance no longer simple.”

And Jesus answering, said, “Huh??”

The above is meant as a kindly stimulus to an examination of the extraordinary dogma that God is both three and one. In a publication entitled *What Baptists Believe*, by Dr. Roy Edgerton, we find the following by way of explanation of Christianity’s central dogma: “The only doctrine of the Trinity that will stand biblical tests is the view that God is One and has made Himself known as three eternal Persons. The Father, Son and Spirit are a unity in a single Person. The concept cannot be completely understood by the human mind, and the use of *Person* to designate each of the three is confusing” (p. 23). The author makes no attempt to offer us a less confusing term and goes on to repeat that God is one Person and three Persons.

The God of all intelligence does not expect us to abandon the common laws of logic and language by which communication is made possible. If we believe that the Bible reveals intelligible truth, it is simply impossible to embrace a God who is at the same time three Persons and yet one Person. Three cannot be one. It is refreshing to turn from this ecclesiastical jumble to the plain statements of Jesus and Paul about who God is: “There is one God, the Father” and “You, Father, are the only one who is truly God.” No verse out of the 31,000 verses of the Bible presents the word “God” with the meaning “God, the Trinity” or “God in three Persons.” This is because no writer of the Bible had been exposed to the post-biblical, philosophically influenced dogma that God is really three, much less that He is (to quote modern apologists) “One What in three Who’s.” ☩

## The Good News

Paul speaks of the comfort to be derived from Scripture. “Whatever was written of old in Scripture was written for our instruction, so that by being steadfast and by drawing strength from the Scriptures we might have Hope” (Rom. 15:4). In troubled times we all need the cheering prospect of a world which is going to be at peace. To get things in perspective, we recommend reading whole sections of Scripture at a sitting. Isaiah 1-36 provides a compendium of spiritual information about present conditions and things as they will be when the Messiah returns in power and glory to implement the task for which he was chosen in God’s Grand Design. The Messiah will take charge of world affairs in a government which will successfully restrain the insane destruction of people and property which continues to characterize the rule of the “god of this age.” Isaiah’s vision of the great time coming pictures “the whole earth [being] at rest and quiet: they burst forth with singing” (Isa. 14:7). These will be the “times of worldwide refreshing” and the “restoration of all things” spiritually, physically and economically, described, as Peter said, by the prophets (Acts 3:21). World government will eventually be shouldered by God’s firstborn, who will be exceptionally endued with “the spirit of wisdom, counsel and the fear of the Lord God” (see Isa. 9:6, 7; 11:1-9). Weapons of war will be a thing of the past (Isa. 2). The Devil, whose massive power to delude and deceive now permeates society, will be arrested and put out of commission (Rev. 20:1-4). This will permit a universal reeducation. Marriages will be stable. Health and wealth will be the order of the day, and the whole earth “will be as full of the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea” (Isa. 11:9). The Middle Eastern Assyrian tyrant (Isa. 10:5ff; 30:31-33; 31:8, 9; Dan. 11:31ff; Mic. 5:2-6), whose object will have been to destroy Israel, will be brought to nothing. “Hades from beneath” will welcome this end-time oppressor as he makes his ignominious descent to the grave, there to join others who have brought ruin on themselves and those entrusted to their rule (Isa. 14:9ff). As the Abomination of Desolation, *he* (note Mark 13:14, “he,” not “it”) will have dominated the Middle East with devastating cruelty to the point of promoting himself to the status of a Messianic figure, herald of the dawn of a new age (Isa. 14:12).

An exhausted remnant of survivors of the final onslaught by anti-Christian powers will straggle back to Israel and repopulate the land (Isa. 11:12-16). The

people of Israel will employ as servants those Gentiles who had in the time of trouble oppressed them so severely (Isa. 14:1-3). Having languished in prison and captivity during the great tribulation, Israelites will return to the land across the Nile and the River Euphrates — a second and final Exodus (Isa. 27:12-13). “This is the purpose which is planned for the whole world and this is the hand stretched out over all the nations. Yahweh has purposed all this and who can resist His Plan?” (see Isa. 14:26, 27).

Christians of all the ages will arise in resurrection from the sleep of death (Dan. 12:2; Isa. 26:17-19) and join the Messiah in the first government to achieve permanent peace and disarmament. “Don’t you know” — have you forgotten this elementary truth — “that the saints are going to manage the world? And if the world is to come under your jurisdiction, can you not settle your present problems in the church?” (see I Cor. 6:2ff, Moffat). The Bible exhorts believers to dwell on these stupendous truths and integrate them into a settled world-view. Insight into God’s intention for the world is a major part of righteousness (see Dan. 11:33; 12:3 and Isa. 53:11 — “by his *knowledge* my servant will cause many to be righteous”).

Hope is the second cardinal virtue alongside faith and love. Strikingly, Paul taught that Hope is the basis and *cause* of faith and love (Col. 1:5). Hope cannot exist with ignorance of God’s future. Ignorance of the content of hope leads to lack of faith and love. “May God who is the source of Hope fill you with all joy and peace through your belief in Him; may you overflow with Hope through the power of holy spirit” (see Rom. 15:13). ☩

## Theological Conference

The 11<sup>th</sup> annual Theological Conference of Atlanta Bible College will be Feb. 8-10<sup>th</sup>, 2002. All of our readers are cordially invited to this unique opportunity for meeting fellow truth-seekers. We will feature a presentation by two professional scientists espousing a so-called “young age” creationist viewpoint, as well as lectures devoted to central themes of Abrahamic Christology and eschatology.

A special block rate room (\$49, 1-4 people) may be booked at the Fairfield Inn (cut-off date Jan. 31). Please phone Fairfield Inn at 770-961-6044 and refer to the group name “Anthony Buzzard.”

Cost of the Conference	Regular Rate	Full-time Student
Early Bird (by Jan 20 <sup>th</sup> )	\$29	\$19
After Jan. 20 <sup>th</sup>	\$39	\$29