

# Focus on the Kingdom

Vol. 17 No. 12

Anthony Buzzard, editor

September, 2015

## Don't Miss the Point! A Hebrew Word You Cannot Afford to Be Without

**D**on't be alarmed! We are not going to require that you learn to read Hebrew! But the words below are **so very important** for our understanding of the very basics of the Bible that we want you to see the actual, original Hebrew of the Bible. Hebrew reads from right to left, perhaps because if you chip in stone and are right-handed you would probably go from right to left.

Have a look at the three words below. The consonants will be clear to you, and the vowels are the dots above, and lines and dots below. Inspect the difference carefully. The consonants, right to left, are Aleph (A, a consonant in Hebrew), Dalet (D), Nun (N), Yod (Y). Below is a quote from the standard lexicon of OT Hebrew, used by all scholars (Strong's will not give you enough information). The entry is for "Lord" (Adon).

“ אֲדֹנָי אֲדֹנִי אֲדֹנִי are variations of

Masoretic pointing [vowel points] to **distinguish divine reference from human**” (*Brown, Driver and Briggs*, p. 10-11).

They are different forms of the Hebrew word for L/lord. We began with a clear statement from one of the standard Hebrew lexicons. A lexicon is a dictionary of Bible words. You see a correct definition above from the well-known Hebrew lexicon, listing all the words from the OT, the Hebrew Bible. Jesus had the same OT books as we, although in a different order. He spoke of his Hebrew Bible as “Law, prophets and writings” (Luke 24:44). Jesus was a “Bible man” convinced that God had spoken authoritatively in the canon (fixed rule) of Scripture. We should follow that example of Jesus, of course. We are to believe the inspired words of God.

Above you see (start on the right) **adonai**, **adonai** and **adoni**. These are forms of the word ADON which means L/lord. The first (from the right) is **adonai** and means the Lord God. It is the title for YHVH (Yahweh), the one Lord God of the Bible. It means “the supreme Lord.” In your English Bible it is written as “Lord” (capital L and then small letters). The proper personal name for God, **Yahweh**, is in all capitals in your Bible — LORD. It occurs nearly 7,000 times.

**Adonai**, the supreme Lord, occurs some 450 times and invariably refers to the One God. On one occasion in

Genesis 18:3, *one* of the three men (angels) who appeared to Abraham is addressed as **Adonai**, since God was using that one angel as a direct representative, who spoke directly for God, i.e. spoke God's words.

The second word, above (read from the right) is also **adonai** but with a different (short) vowel at the end, and this appears only in Genesis 19:2, 18 (NASU) where two angels appear. It is the plural of **adoni** (below) and means **lords**.

The third word is **adoni** (pronounced **adonee**) and means lord (singular), and not Lord. That is, it refers to a **non-Deity superior. The Jews desired that we understand who is God and who is not!**

This word, **adoni**, occurs **195 times** in the Hebrew Bible, and in 10 of those occasions it refers to a single angel. In all the rest of the 195 occurrences a **human superior** is described. This could be Abraham, Esau, Saul or Elisha, even a husband, and very often “my lord the king.” That third word (read from the right) is, we repeat, **adoni** (pronounced **adonee**). The dot under that last Nun (N) makes the sound of “ee.”

Again, **adoni** appears 195 times and is deliberately chosen by the Jews (the custodians of sacred Hebrew Scripture: Rom. 3:2; John 4:22) to describe and define a human (occasionally angel) superior **but never the one God!** The one God, as we said above, is **Adonai**, the supreme Lord. The Jewish scribes were meticulously careful to distinguish man from the One God and so they carefully wrote **Adonai** (with long vowel at the end) for the Lord God, and **adoni** (with an “ee” sound at the end) to mean **non-Deity**.

Now please note this very carefully — and show your friends this eye-opening fact: In **Psalm 110:1** which is **the most often quoted verse in the NT from the OT** (Matt. 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42; Acts 2:34-35; Heb. 1:3, 13 and many other allusions) the word for the second lord is **adoni**, the **non-Deity lord**. In that spectacular oracle (Ps. 110:1), the first Lord, **Yahweh (LORD)** speaks in a prophecy to “my lord.” That “my lord” is the Messiah, as Jesus explained. The Messiah is described as the one destined to “sit at the right hand of the LORD (God) until his enemies are put under his feet.”

That verse is a brilliant description of God's great program for the world, and for the Messiah, of course. The Messiah was to be David's biological descendant through Mary, and lord (**adoni**), **my lord**. Note with care that this is not David's Lord. He is David's **lord**. The Messiah is not adonai, but adoni.

The capital **L** on the second lord in your Bible is a misleading error. You will find that false “Lord,” unless you are reading BBE, CEB, ERV, JPS, NAB, NET, NIV, NRS, RSV, TNK which give the correct translation, “my lord.” If the word in Hebrew here were **Adonai**, Lord, then God would be speaking to God! If that happens then the universe is shaken and shattered. The Bible tells us on page after page that **only one Person** is God — and that is the Father. “Do we not all have one Father? Has not one God created us?” (Mal. 2:10). That is not so hard! God is extremely jealous of His unique position as “the only one who is true God” (John 17:3).

Why do some leading scholars not bother to read the Hebrew in Psalm 110:1? Dr. Larry Hurtado in his detailed commentary on Mark says: “The second Lord in Ps. 110:1 renders **ADONAI**.”<sup>1</sup> Even the distinguished Dr. James Dunn in his *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* (p. 393, fn. 43) reports the second lord as being ADONAI, and it is not!

But this, astonishingly, is a misreporting of simple facts! The second lord reads **adoni** which is lord and not Lord. *Adoni* never means the Lord God. It is “my lord.” This is a huge indicator of who the real Jesus is. He is given his correct birth certificate in Luke 2:11 where the one born is **the lord Messiah**, not the Lord GOD! No one imagined God could be born or that the immortal God could die! No wonder Elizabeth was delighted that the mother of **my lord** (Mary) had come to see her (Luke 1:43). No wonder that Mary Magdalene was distressed that “they have taken away **my lord**, and I don’t know where they have laid him” (John 20:13).

The true definition of the Messiah is supplied by Jesus in Mark 12:36 where Jesus quotes from Psalm 110:1. The lord there is *adoni*, my lord, always, in all 195 occurrences, the **non-Deity title** for a superior.

Jesus is non-Deity, not Deity. He is a unique man, special and begotten miraculously in Mary (Luke 1:35). He is the absolutely exceptional man. He is not God, which would make two GODs. Jesus is the man Messiah of 1 Timothy 2:5. He is the second Adam. Adam was also called Son of God by special creation in Luke 3:38.

God calls Jesus “the **man** who is going to judge the world” (Acts 17:31). God raised him from the dead. God cannot be raised from the dead. God cannot die.

Jesus refers to this person, himself, as the Son of Man (THE human being) at the right hand of God (Mark 14:62). Stephen saw the Son of Man (human being) standing at the right hand of God (Acts 7:56). This was the **adoni**, my lord, of Psalm 110:1. And Peter defined this same Son of Man as “a **man** appointed by God” in

Acts 2:22. He is also “the **man** at My right hand” in Psalm 80:17; “the man, My associate” (Zech. 13:7).

So the Messiah is a unique human being filled with the spirit, but not a second GOD. There cannot be two who are God!

There is no more important verse in the Bible than Psalm 110:1. No other verse is alluded to in the New more often than Psalm 110:1. It wins the prize for being the greatest of all proof texts. No other verse is cited **verbatim** by Jesus, in three Gospels, and by Peter in Acts 2:34-36 and also by Hebrews 1:3, 13. As you now see, this precious verse in many — the majority — of translations contains a **stunning mistranslation**: the second lord is falsely written “my Lord” and not correctly as “my lord.” This is a glaring mistranslation.

The difference between Lord and lord is nothing less than the difference between God and not-God! Check with any Jewish friend!

You can inspect 450 samples of *Adonai* (the Lord GOD) and 195 samples of *adoni* (my lord) to see that consistent difference at work. Then note that in Psalm 110:1 most translations (not all) confuse the difference by writing “my Lord” and not “my lord”! You can inspect 645 (450 plus 195) samples to see the difference. And note the confusion of God and man **only in Psalm 110:1**. *Adoni* is translated correctly as “my lord” on all the other 194 occasions. You have 178 samples of **my lord** in the OT before you come to Psalm 110:1. Go through them one by one. It is a fascinating study.

(There is one exception in the KJV in Daniel 12:8 where *adoni* is wrongly written as “my Lord,” because a preexisting Christ is thought to be there!)

Jesus silenced all questions with Psalm 110:1. He baffled his audience. It is essential to understand what Jesus taught us as he cited this verse. It is a huge piece of Truth defining God and Jesus.

YHWH is rightly said to be the personal name of the God of Israel (7,000 times).

Ask your friends: When you say **YHVH**, do you mean 1) all three Persons together? or 2) each of the Persons is called **YHVH**?

3) Or do you mean correctly, by Yahweh, the one Person God of Israel, God of Abraham, God of David, God of the Jews and God of the Gentiles and God of our lord Jesus Christ?

What answer do you get? Jews and Muslims are deeply affected by your answer. The correct answer is all-important. ✧

**To our international readers:** If you would like to receive *Focus on the Kingdom* by **email** each month (and save us postage), please send us an email to **anthonybuzzard@mindspring.com** or sign up at [www.restorationfellowship.org](http://www.restorationfellowship.org) with your name and email address.

<sup>1</sup> *A Good News Commentary*, p. 197.

## Jesus the “God-Man”: Really?

by Greg Deuble, Australia

The majority of professing Christians — whether Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, or Protestant — confess that Jesus is “fully God” *and at the same time* “fully man.” That is to say, Jesus is 100% God *and* 100% man *simultaneously*. These two “natures” — the Divine Son of God and the human-born Son of Man — are thus alleged to be in perfect union in the one person of Jesus Christ. The technical and theological term for this perfect union of the two natures is “hypostatic union.” Thus, to qualify as “orthodox” one is urged to believe that Jesus Christ is **the co-eternal, co-equal “God the Son,” second Person of the Divine Trinity while at the same time true man: one Person with two indivisible natures, the perfect “God-man.”**

Throughout the generations since this doctrine was first officially endorsed and (often cruelly) enforced — from the Council of Chalcedon in AD 451 onwards — anybody who has dared to ask reasonable questions as to how this doctrine is both a Biblical and logical impossibility has been ostracised.

So, at the risk of being “heterodox” (i.e. not “orthodox”) I am going to ask some questions, based solely on the Scriptural revelations concerning the Person of the God of the Bible, and concerning the nature of man. These are questions that many outstanding minds who also profess faith in the Living God have posed in every generation since Chalcedon in 451, so I am in no way a lone ranger in my quest for sanity and sound Bible reading.

Before proceeding, let us be absolutely clear as to the orthodox belief. For orthodox Christianity, Jesus cannot possess only *some* human qualities; he must possess all, so as to qualify as fully human. *At the same time*, he cannot possess only *some* divine qualities; he must have *all* to qualify as fully Divine. Jesus must be 100% God and 100% man *at the same time*.

A moment’s reflection will show this proposition is impossible by both Biblical and logical standards. Let us take one simple example from the lips of Jesus himself: “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone” (Matt. 24:36).

This verse is highly problematic for the “hypostatic union” theory. How can Jesus be “fully God” and not know something so crucial that affects the history of the entire globe? Was Jesus speaking the absolute truth when he said he actually **doesn’t know** the hour? And was Jesus speaking the absolute truth when he said his Father alone knows the hour? According to Jesus, no one else — not even the angels in heaven nor even himself the Son — knows the hour.

The usual desperate wriggle-out from this dilemma runs something like this: What Jesus predicates of himself, namely ignorance, is true of him *as a human*, though it is not true of him as Divine. As the God-Man, Jesus is simultaneously omniscient as God (in company with the other Persons in the Godhead) and ignorant of some things as a man (in company with other persons of the human race).

Ah, I get it! Jesus is *simultaneously* aware and ignorant of this fact. So he knows the truth (because he is all-knowing as God) but then informs himself that he does not know this fact because he is simultaneously human? *So Jesus knows that he doesn’t know what he knows, and this is the absolute truth of the matter, right?*

Do we really suppose the disciples who heard Jesus utter this “truth” thought to themselves, “Oh, that means he doesn’t know as a human, but of course, he knows as God”? Forgive the irony in my typing finger, but no wonder it took the Gentile Church 300 years to come up with this so-called answer! The stubborn exegetical fact of Scripture is that Jesus wasn’t talking about his own divine nature versus his human nature. Jesus specifically says “only the Father knows” — which means that neither of Jesus’ “two natures” knows either!

No, the problem, of course, is not in what the text says. The problem is reading the text according to the paradigm of the so-called “hypostatic union.” Biblical exegesis must be made to fit with **our traditions** at all costs, no matter how awkward. But that is dangerously backwards!

Let’s face the truth Jesus tells here. There are some things that he as the Son of God does not know. What causes the angst is the doctrine that Jesus is 100% God and 100% man *at the same time*. Which is to make the nonsensical assertion that *Jesus knows all things and does not know all things simultaneously!*

So, how would you like your theological fruitcake cooked? Plain, according to what the text says, or with plenty of added man-invented concoctions according to what the Church has dictated for centuries one *must* believe under pain of persecution, excommunication or threat?

To be human means one is prone to limitations in knowledge. To be God means One has no limitations and is perfect and complete in all knowledge. You can’t have it both ways *at the same time*. This is to make the orthodox Jesus schizophrenic, surely?

By definition a thing cannot be the opposite of itself. A thing cannot be perfect and imperfect *at the same time*. The presence of one of these qualities implies the absence of the other. Jesus was either one or the other. He cannot logically be both. To believe he can be both unlimited and limited *at the same time* makes no more sense than if I were to tell you I just saw a square circle! Would I be

telling you the circle was not round, in which case it would not be a circle? Or would I be saying the square was circular? This is to speak meaningless nonsense. It's a sheer impossibility, unless we start playing fast and loose with the definition of what a circle is and what a square is. Or what would you think of my sanity if I spoke of hot ice cubes? Imaginative it might be, but sensible and factual it is not.

Thus, to say that someone is all-knowing and yet does not know all things *at the same time* is to say that "X" and "not X" can both be true. This is either to abandon the meaning of words or else to abandon logic, and in either case it means we are speaking nonsense that can have no meaning for us.

But can't God do anything He chooses to do? Of course He can — *except* those things that are inconsistent with being God. Can He choose to be evil or ignorant? Could He be the Devil or nothing at all? May it never be! The Christian God is the Eternal God of Israel, the God of the Universe and will never nor can ever be anything other than *that* God. He is the God of Truth who cannot lie.

So, if we want to say, "God did and did not" or "God is and is not" *simultaneously* our statements are meaningless. Is God pleased with nonsense? When we say Jesus is perfect God and perfect man *at the same time* we are saying two opposite things which cannot be possible, even for the Almighty! Let's face it — there are some things even God cannot do, or He ceases to be God.

Let's take another Bible example to illustrate the dilemma of the "orthodox" God-Man theory. Jesus tells us in John 4:24 that "God is Spirit." Jesus means that God (Who in the previous verse he calls "the Father") operates through His spirit. This ought to be obvious because He existed before the universe of matter. God created matter and does not consist of that which He created. It is therefore axiomatic that God Who is Spirit is not composed of anything that can decompose or change. As Spirit He exists outside of creation and unlike matter cannot be divided. This is also why God is able to say, "I the LORD change not" (Mal. 3:6). Fundamental to the God of the Bible is His transcendence and what the theologians call His immutability, that is, His unchangeable nature.

The absence of change in His wholeness is the basis for the absence of any divisibility in God. As Spirit, God fills space and time in the physical universe, but nothing in the physical universe becomes God as a result of being filled by Him. The universe cannot contain Him. God is Spirit, not changeable material, which is why He is an indivisible One.

God Himself draws a clear line of distinction between Himself as Spirit and men as "flesh." When Israel was running off to Egypt for help in time of trouble, they were

charged with making a foolish swap. God wryly points out, "Now the Egyptians are men, and not God, and their horses are flesh and not spirit" (Isa. 31:3). The categories of flesh and spirit are not to be confused or mixed. Note that God puts men and horses in the one and same category of physical "flesh" and puts Himself in another category as Spirit. It is the pagan nations, the Gentiles, who always mix Spirit and matter and the Bible calls this the sin of idolatry!

Jesus himself knew this. Contrast Jesus' definition of God who is spirit with his own description of himself. After his resurrection from the dead Jesus challenged his disciples, "See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; touch me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have" (Luke 24:39). Jesus puts himself, even in his resurrected state, as completely physical. Jesus thus puts himself in a different category altogether from "the Father" whom he has defined for us as spirit.

This is why the God of the Bible is defined as inherently "immortal." Twice in one little letter the apostle Paul describes God as immortal. He writes that "the only God" is "eternal, immortal, invisible" (1 Tim. 1:17). The particular Greek word here for "immortal" means "incorruptible." God is spirit and as such His essential nature can never decay. By definition God is eternally incorruptible!

Now, again in the same letter Paul writes that this God "alone possesses immortality" (1 Tim. 6:16). Here Paul uses a different word to convey immortality. It is the word that means "never dying," "incapable of death." By definition God "alone" and all by Himself possesses the quality of never being able to die. It is impossible for God to die! When we put these two verses together we are meant to understand that God "alone" is "the only God" who possesses immortality and by definition cannot die, and therefore cannot decay.

Contrast this with Jesus. The Scripture tells us that when Jesus was buried he was in a state of "decay" (Acts 2:27). Jesus was dead and corruptible. He was a man. And were it not for the faithfulness and the power of God his Father who alone possesses immortality, Jesus would have rotted in the grave. (It is not without accident that every single verse in the NT that declares Jesus' resurrection tells us it was God who brought him up from the grave from among the dead. Every verse! There is not a verse anywhere that tells us, as many of our hymns and choruses do, that Jesus raised himself up from the dead. God honoured Jesus' faithful obedience with the gift of his immortality.) Death can never again touch Jesus. And this is the hope of every believer in Christ who is the "first-fruits of those who sleep [i.e. are dead]" (1 Cor. 15:20). Because he lives we live and will forever via resurrection. Jesus is the first man whom God has granted

to have immortality. But it was not always so. He was corruptible man for he died. Jesus is now called “the living one” but he says he was dead but behold, he is alive now forevermore (Rev. 1:18). This cannot be said of God.

I know I will be challenged that if Jesus was not God, then how can I be saved? I am often assured that only God was big enough to pay the infinite price of all the world’s sin. This is why Jesus had to be the God-Man for a so-called “mere man” could not be a big enough Saviour for all men.

Now stop and think about this proposition. If Jesus is the pre-existent, pre-human Divine Son he is purported to be, then this person must by reason of his Divinity be immortal and **so could not have died** on the cross for my sins. And it will not do to appeal to the fact that Jesus had “two natures” and that it was only his *human* nature that died on the cross. If it was only his human nature that died, how on this theory does the Trinitarian still maintain that Jesus had to be God otherwise I have no Saviour? On this theory it was the God part or nature that did not die anyway! On this theory it was only the “mere human” nature of Jesus that died. And don’t forget the “hypostatic union” teaches the two natures are indivisible anyway!

So I am still left with no Saviour according to the popular theory. I am left with a God-Man who could not by definition die, but died anyway! And there is not a single theologian yet who has been able to explain this, which is a sure sign it is a man-made “God-man” the Church has constructed.

So the important question is: How does the death of Jesus save us? He tells us that, “as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life” (John 3:14-15). This refers to the incident recorded in Numbers 21:7-9 in which the people were dying from the bites of the poisonous snakes. Moses was instructed by God to make a serpent of brass and set it on a pole for all to see; those who *believed* as they looked were saved from the poison of the snakes.

Jesus compares this incident to *faith* in him: “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever *believes* in him may have the life of the age to come.” The point here should be very clear; the saving of the thousands who looked to the brass serpent had nothing whatever to do with anything inherent in that bronze serpent — they were saved by *God* through *faith* in His promise that whoever looked and believed would be saved. God said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live” (Num. 21:8). The next verse confirms that those who had the faith to look lived. The same is true for all who are looking to Jesus for salvation through obedient *faith*. It is

God’s saving power in Christ which saves from sin and death. It is therefore not something inherent in the constitution of Christ that saves, but it is God our Father who saves us in and through Christ. Salvation is entirely God’s work, and by His grace alone. Jesus is the mediating and instrumental agency through whom God saves. Jesus certainly “humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death on a cross” (Phil. 2:8).

We should not overlook the fact that as the sinless and perfectly obedient Son who was always well-pleasing to Father God, Jesus was perfectly qualified to be the one to offer a perfect offering for every man (see 1 Tim. 2:6). He was the lamb without blemish.

Let’s draw this to a close. Can one person be infinite and finite *at the same time*? Can one Person, even God, be unlimited yet limited *at the same time*? Can one person know all things but not know some things *at the same time*? Can one person be incorruptible and immortal spirit and *at the same time* be decomposable and death-bound physicality? Sufficient has been raised to seriously challenge the theory of the “hypostatic union” of two completely opposite natures in the one God-Man of Church “orthodoxy.” Indeed, it may be sensibly stated that the Jesus who is “fully God” and “fully man” *at the same time* is in reality neither God nor man. And we will be judged by how well we respond with intelligence to revealed truth. Believing what is false is called wickedness (2 Thess. 2:11-12). ✧

## Game Lost...Life Saved?

by Dan Shaw, Michigan

**R**ecently, at a community baseball game, I had the opportunity to talk with a young school teacher about Jesus the Jewish Messiah. Our conversation started in a totally different direction but soon gravitated to the mystical implications of the Bible. I asserted that to understand Christianity was to understand the Christ. To do this it has to be understood that Jesus was a Jew, raised as a Jew from Jewish parents (Joseph was legally his father, but not biologically). Jesus taught as a Jew and believed the Bible Gospel message of the Jews. This was a shock to my listener as she had never thought of this connection! As a member of an orthodox group she no doubt had been inundated with the heresy that Jesus was not really a man as he proclaimed, but was God Himself! As we continued talking (missing the last few innings of the game!) we discussed the Book of Daniel and ideas about the Messiah she had never heard of. We discussed the important exchange between Jesus and the rabbi in Mark 12:29 in which Jesus proclaimed a single God, not a three-in-one God. She had not heard that story or of the Shema (“Hear O Israel,” the essential Truth of Judaism/Christianity) before!

My friends, our task is far more daunting than we can imagine! The secular world has not heard the true message but neither has a majority of the “Christian” world either! Time is short for each of us, and we must make use of every single opportunity Jesus puts before us of sharing this unique Truth which he has entrusted us with! I am grateful that at a small community ball game a door was opened. As our time together ended (with the last “out”) I encouraged her to learn more from the Restoration Fellowship web site.

Our team lost the game that night but a life may have been won! Thanks, Anthony, for your courageous example, encouragement and teachings that make me bolder and braver to speak up when the chance arises!

(More at my “Jesus Is Still a Jew” on youtube with hundreds of comments which will empower you to speak of this gigantic truth about the identity of God and Jesus. 1 Timothy 2:5 ought to be enough!)✧

For our readers in Washington state who may not be aware, a congregation of the General Conference Church of God was formed a year and a half ago west of the Cascades. The Western Washington Church of God meets at the following locations once each month:

**2nd Sunday:** Tenino High School, 500 W. 2nd St., Tenino; 10:00 a.m.

**3rd Sunday:** Kent Senior Activity Center, 600 E. Smith St., Kent; 10:00 a.m.

**4th Sunday:** Vancouver YWCA, 3609 Main St., Vancouver; 10:00 a.m.

No Bible studies or worship services on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays at this time. For more information contact Pastor Robin Todd at [robinsings4u@comcast.net](mailto:robinsings4u@comcast.net), or call him in Olympia at (360) 701-9219. Robin also has information about others around the U.S. looking for contact with other believers. You can see a list of those contact cities/towns by going to [www.scatteredbrethren.org](http://www.scatteredbrethren.org) and then clicking on the appropriate “region,” or by emailing him at the above address.

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## Comments

“I am working on my BS Religion in Christian Ministries. I was converted rather dramatically in 2010 and have dedicated my life to serving Christ and seeking truth, which has led to my desire not to accept dogmatically any doctrine taught by the Church, but to look for the best possible biblical understanding of the faith as the Early Church would have understood it, in its original context from those who would have lived in Hellenized society but would have clung to a truly Jewish understanding of the Abrahamic faith. Because of this, using many of the methods of Bible study taught during my course of study, I often found myself taking theological positions contrary to those taught at my evangelical school.

“Upon writing on the nature of Christ in a theology class, for instance, and truly studying John 1:1 and the Greek understanding of *logos*, I found that John was arguing fiercely for a **monotheistic faith**, and that this was not the defense of the Trinity that most evangelicals make it out to be. As I continued to study and write on the nature of Christ, I found all explanations incomprehensible unless I was to remove any Trinitarian presuppositions. Jesus was not pre-human, preexistent, since Jesus really was a man. Jesus is not synonymous with a preexisting *logos*, as this was a term that was already understood in Greek philosophy as the divine order in the universe, something that the Apostles attributed to God the Father.

“While I struggled with my discoveries, this actually caused me to be able to eliminate many stumbling blocks caused by the inherited, incomprehensible doctrine, and to appreciate Christ as the **Jewish Messiah**; the righteous man appointed by God to atone for our sin and become the first immortalized man, by resurrection. Our Lord was a man who was tempted as we are, and since he was a man he would have been capable of succumbing to such temptation, but he overcame temptation by standing on the Word of God. A man who, because he was righteous and sinless, and because he was appointed by God, could make atonement for those foreknown to be God’s people, the Church.

“Likewise, when writing on the doctrine of hell, I found that I could no longer subscribe to the notion that hell exists as a place of **eternal punishment** for the sinner, but, rather, had to accept that the Jewish people taught that people are asleep in death (Dan. 12:2) and that all dead are in the grave, not being immediately sent to a heaven or hell, as Christians now teach. Also, it is clear that the word *Gehenna*, translated as hell, refers to an actual valley outside of Jerusalem, where the bodies of the wicked and of animals were often disposed of. The overall teaching of the Old and New Testament indicates

that the soul is not immortal — another construct from Greek philosophy — and that the dead are doomed to destruction (this is widely admitted in scholarly literature, too). They will physically die in disgrace and be forever separated from God by his wrath, which inevitably caused their permanent destruction. The righteous, however, are granted eternal life, which is literally ‘the life of the age to come,’ the Kingdom of God on earth.

“Furthermore, even though I have previously preached contrary to this fact in churches, as it was clearly expected and dogmatically accepted, the truth is that the dead in Christ do not float around in the clouds in some harp-filled heaven surrounded by the angels. This makes for a comforting notion during funerals, but it detracts and diverts from the hope that we have in the Resurrection. Nowhere is this notion of immediate paradise after death taught in Scripture. Instead, the dead in Christ rise to dwell and reign here on earth (Rev. 5:10, etc.), as our Redeemer restores it. It is here on this planet renewed that the new heaven and new earth will exist.

“I am pleasantly shocked to find a group of people who are so theologically in line. I have almost feared sharing my views on many things elsewhere, as I know that they would quickly cause me to be labeled a heretic. In the sense that I advocate for an alternative school of thought, one based on the Scriptures and not the traditions of man, indeed I am a heretic, but I do wish that I could express these truths more freely without being condemned by the churches.

“As I continue to seek my role in the proclamation of the Gospel, I would surely like to do so alongside brothers and sisters in Christ who are equally willing to seek the truth in the Scriptures, and teach sound doctrine concerning our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I have been watching several of your videos and really look forward to continuing to reach out to like-minded individuals, and to be able to work together to better understand our Messiah and the Gospel, and to be better at proclaiming this Gospel of the Kingdom.” — *Ohio*

“I come from a Trinitarian background and then discovering ‘some’ truth I left Trinitarian churches behind. When I started questioning everything, and expressing my new discoveries, my grandfather came out and said, ‘You are a heretic!’ I said to the whole assembly of members and church goers that I wanted to leave in peace, since my views were no longer to their satisfaction. My uncle stood up and said, ‘We do not let you go in peace.’ That’s how I left my Trinitarian church, even though I still think about them and wish that I would be able to tell the truth about ADONAI and His adoni (my lord), and the Gospel as Jesus preached it (Luke 4:43).

“After that I did not end up in a better place. My parents discovered *Trumpet* magazine, published by PCG, a remnant of the Herbert Armstrong movement. I never joined any of their groups; I only read their literature. That continued for a few years as my views changed. At first it looked like I was discovering hidden truths, but later I started to question everything also, because of inconsistencies. Armstrong’s writing pushed me to think freely, not being bound by conventional thinking, and yet there was no freedom of thinking in his religion. Did I say that I tried to observe Sabbath? I failed miserably; at least I didn’t do anything foolish by losing my job. My conclusion was that to observe Sabbath you need to live in Israel, in the time of David when Israel under the Law followed God. I was trying very hard to find anybody who shared my views on God and religion. I was looking at different church websites, reading their statements of faith, and I stumbled on one website with a link to the Restoration fellowship website.

“What a relief! I found freedom. Why is it so hard to see the truth, simple truth? Why do people try to complicate simple things? Anyway my wish is that I could go and study at Atlanta Bible College, but I have family to support and moving to Atlanta or anywhere is out of the question right now. Having said that, your books, articles and videos from your website and the **21stcr.org** website are the next best thing. Thank you for doing this. And thank you for the translation of the New Testament; it came just in time. After all this, I still have so many questions, and so little time to figure them out. Having little children takes most of the time away, and that is where my concern is. Before it’s too late, before they are set in their ways I want to teach them the right way, so that when they grow up they won’t be confused about who God is and His Son Jesus. And so that they will be able to answer any one who questions their faith.”

— *Pennsylvania*

“I subscribed to the *Focus on the Kingdom* magazine some time ago after finding out that the dogma of the Trinity does not at all exist in the Bible. I bought the German translation of your book *Christianity’s Self-Inflicted Wound*. I am thankful for your study videos alone and with Pastor Dan Gill, which are very helpful for me. I have also found the series of Sean Finnegan ‘500 Years’ extremely helpful. I am so very thankful for the modern miracle of technology which makes all these possible. Our group of about 10 meets up every Sunday to have service in one of our homes, sometimes even in Hungary! We pray that we may be able to reach people, that God may instill this hunger in their hearts to get to know the whole truth, to get to know the one true God! In the name of my brothers and sisters here, I would like to send you all our heartfelt greetings from Vienna.”

— *Austria*