

# Focus on the Kingdom

Vol. 19 No. 8

Anthony Buzzard, editor

May, 2017

## Ecclesiastes

by Brandon Gurley, Illinois

*Brandon wrote this paper for a distance learning course at Atlanta Bible College.*

From the beginning of our lives we're bombarded with goals. Do well in school, go to college, get a good job, have a family. We work so hard to accomplish tasks in life, some that seem to be endless — paying bills and working ridiculous numbers of hours — to achieve things and have material things that seem important, but are they all that important in the end? In the big picture how important are these tasks and material things? Irish writer Oscar Wilde had a paradoxical proverb that in this world there are two tragedies: "one is not getting what we want; the other is getting what we want." Ecclesiastes tells us that most everything is meaningless. The meaning of life is summed up in the last few lines: "Fear God and His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man" (12:13). "What good will it be for a man if he gains the world, yet forfeits his soul?" (Matt. 16:26). Our world has become so fast paced with no room anywhere for patience or time to stop and think: in the end does all this really matter? "What does a man gain from all his labor at which he toils under the sun?" (1:3).

Today's society is moving at an alarmingly fast pace, with deadlines and no time for breaks, family, or even just a second to step back and remember the words of the teacher: "Meaningless! Meaningless!" says the teacher. "Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless" (1:2). Things in life that seem important to us are really meaningless in the end. "What does a man gain from all his labor at which he toils under the sun?" (1:3). We spend our lives working and "leaving our mark," but Ecclesiastes says, "There is no remembrance of men of old, and even those who are yet to come will not be remembered by those who follow" (1:11).

"And I saw that all labor and all achievement spring from man's envy of his neighbor. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind" (4:4). So Ecclesiastes is simply saying that nothing on this earth should take priority in one's life over following the commands of God. Though work is a required task of life, and wealth can be acquired, we shouldn't worship money. We strive to ensure we have wealth in the future, a 401k to retire, savings accounts to grow, and sometimes spend money on things such as lotto tickets, or gambling at casinos trying to gain a little more, yet Ecclesiastes says, "Whoever loves money never has money enough; whoever loves his

wealth is never satisfied with his income. This too is meaningless" (5:10).

"The sleep of a laborer is sweet, whether he eats little or much, but the abundance of a rich man permits him no sleep" (5:12). "Whoever obeys his command will come to no harm, and the wise heart will know the proper time and procedure for every matter" (8:5). "No man has power over the wind to contain it; so no one has power over the day of his death" (8:8). ✧

## I Was Forced to Abandon Orthodoxy

by Kevin George, Texas

This is my explanation as to why, in order to maintain my personal integrity, I was forced to abandon what is commonly referred to as "orthodox Christianity." I still consider myself very much a follower of Jesus, the Messiah of the Bible. That has not changed at all. What I mean by "orthodox Christianity" is the doctrinal package which I was taught (and which I taught to others) as a requirement to be considered a genuine Christian.

I was told that what I was being taught at church and even at my Bible college was Sola Scriptura. For me, Sola Scriptura means seeking to understand the Bible according to the language, times, and customs of when it was written, which means a first-century interpretation of Scripture. However, my extensive research has revealed, to my great disappointment, that most churches today have a 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup>-century interpretation of Scripture. When Sola Scriptura is mentioned, the unspoken disclaimer is that it is Sola Scriptura — *as interpreted according to the beliefs of the "church fathers" of the 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> century*. So in essence what they have is really a modified version of 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup>-century Roman Catholicism.

For most of my life I believed in the fundamentals of the faith. I still do in a sense. However, I now know that those fundamentals are not the same. What has "ruined" me, from the perspective of so-called "orthodoxy," are two things: 1. Bible software, and 2. Church history.

Bible software has enabled me to quickly compare text with text, especially in the original languages, and see "behind the curtain" of translators' bias and established dogmas. I find that at convenient times words like "which" are changed to "who" (Acts 5:32; Rom. 8:16; John 14:26); "perceive" is changed to "know" (John 16:30, etc.); "in" is changed to "by" (Col. 1:16); and words are added ("going back" John 16:28; "returning"

John 13:3, NIV), all to lead the reader to understand the Bible in a manner that fits into the philosophical world view of the 4th-5th century fathers. Whether this is intentional or not only God knows, but it is deceptive, and Bible software makes these facts available to any computer-savvy person who wants to check it out. We no longer need “experts” to tell us what the Bible really says.

Before Jesus died, there was only one true religion: Judaism. Well-established history freely admits that the very early church, such as the 3000 who joined on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, were strictly monotheistic, “devout Jews” (Acts 2:5) (as was also Jesus himself in Mark 12:29 and John 4:22, in reference to the words “our” and “we,” by which he was embracing the standard Jewish definition of only one God). The message they heard Peter proclaim was of “Jesus of Nazareth, **a man** attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs, which God did **through** him” (Acts 2:22). God “would raise up the Christ [Messiah] to sit on his [David’s] throne” (2:30), and “God has **made** this [man] Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ” (2:36, NKJV). Absolutely nothing in this message would have led the strict monotheistic Jewish listeners who believed in this man Jesus to “convert” to believing in a different co-equal God who is the product of Jew-hating Greek philosophical theologians of later centuries. (Several years later, in Acts 10:38, Peter is led by God to Cornelius, and Peter tells essentially the same message: “**God anointed** Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for **God was with him.**”)

In Romans 3:1-2 we read Paul's Jewish hermeneutic (basis of interpretation): “What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? Much in every way! Chiefly because to them [the Jews] were committed the oracles of God.” Paul is putting the church at Rome on notice that, while the Jews are not right about everything, the Scripture was given to the Jews first, in their language, and should therefore be understood from their point of view. He later warned repeatedly in other epistles not to resort to philosophies of men (1 Tim. 6:20; Col. 2:8). Yet this is precisely what we see developing in the second century (Justin Martyr, etc.) and increasing through the following centuries, leading to various church council proclamations that would have been alien to anything the Apostles had ever believed.

It does not take much reading into the history of the early church councils before becoming shocked and disgusted. I assumed that the councils were occasions when the Scriptures were laid out on tables and men debated about the meaning of texts and prayerfully rendered their verdict. But the reality is much different. They were full of bullying, intimidation, accusations,

fight, greed, bribery, and politics. The winner would obtain the backing of the emperor, so much more was at stake than a sincere desire to find truth. As just one example of the proceedings, the Council of Chalcedon met in 451 to reverse the prior council’s ruling of 449 in which a riot broke out and bishop Flavian was beaten and died 3 days later! What we have been given, even in the seminaries, is a white-washed version of history to make the winners look good, ignoring the ungodly process by which they won. No wonder I have never been in a church that encouraged the congregation to learn church history! It seems best to keep these facts hidden in order to protect “orthodoxy.” I am not saying that this is a conspiracy, but the facts of history are certainly devastating to what is called “orthodoxy.”

I have heard through the years from various pastors that they only regard the church councils to the degree that they correspond to Scripture. But that is no different than someone saying that they believe in the Book of Mormon to the degree that it corresponds to Scripture. (At least the Book of Mormon, mostly fiction, has entire chapters copied from the Bible.) This is a bad precedent in my view, and is an excuse to continue resorting to these corrupt councils to affirm what they must believe in order to obtain favor, approval, and finances from their peers.

I found it rather shocking that in Grudem’s *Systematic Theology* (used in many seminaries) he deceives when he says, “Written Scripture is our final authority” and “people sometimes (intentionally or unintentionally) attempt to substitute some other final standard than the written words of Scripture” (p. 84-85). Yet, when defending his claim that Christ has a dual nature, he writes, “**It seems we have to do this** [split Jesus into two natures] **if we are willing to affirm the Chalcedonian statement** about ‘the property of each nature being preserved’” (p. 558, emphasis mine). Then he admits that a dual reference to the meaning of “logos” as a “unifying principle of the universe...allowed it to make sense, in Greek thinking” (p. 546). But the writers of Scripture were writing as Jews who are Hebrews, not Greeks! Hebrews in Israel did not use Greek abstract philosophical concepts to explain God. Yes, there were some Jews like the Egyptian Philo who blended the Hebrew Scripture with Greek philosophy, but he was rejected by his own people and his writings were preserved by the Gnostic elements of the “Christian” church! Philo should not have any credibility today, yet it is his writings that Christian apologists resort to when defending certain claims, particularly when the word “logos” is taught from a Greek philosophical perspective instead of a linguistic perspective!

For example if I tell you, “I give you my word: I will send my son to cut your grass.” When my son appears,

my word has become flesh in my son. He is my word to you. My word is me and an extension of me, just as my hand is me and an extension of me. Simple. No need to get philosophical.

I used to blindly accept and believe and even teach what the “experts” were saying, supposing that they had studied into the issues with a genuine desire to discern truth, wherever that truth may lead. But when I was able to see, through Bible software and history, how the texts were being massaged and manipulated to fit into their philosophical version of 4th-5th century theology, and that this is their standard of truth, not original first-century Sola Scriptura, then they lost my trust.

You may have never considered this, but the fact is that *if* this 4th-5<sup>th</sup>-century theology defines true Christianity, the “ABCs” of what one must believe for salvation, then until this version of “Christianity” was defined by the church councils, *nobody* was truly saved. Not even the very Apostles themselves believed this, so they could not have been saved. That is pure nonsense, an insult to the original Gospel message and to Christ himself. If Jesus needed Greek philosophical theologians to iron out his teaching and finally “get it right,” he was a bumbling, incompetent teacher. That is a very low view of Jesus, a different Greek version of Jesus, not the true Son of God — the Jewish Messiah.

Here is an example of serious error when this Greek thinking is used: When reading Grudem’s *Systematic Theology* I found that he has a difficult time getting Jesus to be actually and truly dead. This is what happens when Jesus is defined according to Greek philosophical (Gnostic) ideas instead of reading the text as Jews spoke and understood things in normal, everyday Jewish speech of that day. Grudem says, “It is true that when Jesus died his physical body died...” and “The person of Christ experienced death” (p. 559). Yet he says that Jesus “**experienced** a death that is **like** the one we as believers experience if we die before Christ returns” (emphasis mine). He has Jesus dead “in his human nature,” and really only “experiencing” what it is like to die, because the real Jesus/God cannot die. Dying “in a nature” is an incomprehensible claim and is never mentioned in Scripture. Did *he* die *in* this nature, or did the *nature* die? Is this abstract concept of a nature even something that is alive that can die? None of these questions are ever dealt with.

When investigating the claims of a “nature” I find that it is a philosophical concept that is pre-Socratic and comes from the Greeks. It is *not* a Hebrew way of speaking about things. It is the idea that a “what” (a nature) determines the “who.” In this view, a dog is not a dog because God designed it that way, but rather because a “dog nature” dwells in it. In a similar manner, we are considered humans because we have a “human nature”

within us. This makes our bodies to be containers in which one or more “natures” can dwell, which is Greek thinking from Plato. If we had a dog nature assigned to us we would be dogs in human bodies! This is pagan, unbiblical thinking — bunk. But it is applied to Jesus whose body can live or die “in” one nature (whatever that really means), and yet he is simultaneously alive “in” another nature.

As I understand it, a nature is an “it,” a concept, not a living thing. Yet this non-living “it” concept regulates and determines what the “who” is like. When applied to the Trinity, we have 3 Persons and one Nature. Therefore, the Trinity is 3 Persons and one It, and the “It” is really the GOD of the Persons, for without this Super-Divine “IT-NATURE” the 3 Persons would not be God! This is the result of Gnostic thinking, which is denied as a doctrine, yet is constantly utilized in order to make Jesus’ Divinity “make sense, in Greek thinking” (to use Grudem’s words, p. 546).

To complicate matters further, Grudem goes on to state, “Now we must affirm that anything that is true of the human or the divine nature is true of the person of Christ” (p. 561). Wow, so then did the “person” of Christ really die on page 559, or did this “person” just “experience” something that is “like” death? He says, “Therefore, even though Jesus’ divine nature did not actually die, Jesus went through the **experience** of death as a whole person, and both human and divine natures **somehow shared in that experience**” (emphasis mine). So, his human nature “shared” death? Is this “human nature” alive? Is it even a thing? Can a thing, or an abstract concept, actually share? Can an “it” die?

Scripture insists that *if Jesus did not rise from the dead*, we have nothing to offer but empty words: “Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he **raised up Christ**: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins” (1 Cor. 15:15-17, KJV).

Therefore, simply redefining “death” to mean “separation from God” does not work because Scripture also says that God is immortal, so whatever definition you use for death, it cannot apply to God, “Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen” (1 Tim. 6:16, KJV).

I was taught to read human and divine natures into the Scriptures as a means to understand how Jesus can be fully God and fully man. Now, after historic and linguistic research, I find that these were later Gnostic ideas that were brought to bear on the text to make Jesus become someone different than the Jesus the first-century

Jewish apostles knew. When I set out to prove that my upbringing orthodox teaching was correct, I found that I had been deceived, and so are most others who believe this way. I do not assign to people any deliberate deceptive intent, except perhaps for those like Grudem who are scholars who seem to know better, but have chosen to persist in teaching the deception.

My primary point is that “orthodox” theology is 4th-5th century-based, and not rooted in Jewish thoughts and linguistics as the Jews in the 1<sup>st</sup>-century intended them to be understood and believed. Paul wrote, “So then, brothers, stand firm and **hold to the traditions that you were taught by us** [the Jewish apostles], either by our spoken word or by our letter” (2 Thess. 2:15). Jude also appealed to hold on to the original faith: “Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to **contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints**” (Jude 3). This is what I call 1<sup>st</sup>-century faith, and is what I seek. *Jude 3 shows that the faith of the first century was sufficient and complete.* There was no need for the faith to be modified in order to make it palatable to later Greek neo-Platonic philosophical minds, thereby removing the inherent Jewishness of the Gospel that was considered offensive to men like Augustine, John Chrysostom, Tertullian, Origen, etc. A non-Jewish Gospel is another Gospel that is inherently anti-Jewish Messiah, and denies the very reason for Jesus being God’s Messiah — to become the second Adam through whom God will restore all things (Luke 9:20; Acts 3:21). That which is anti-Messianic is anti-Christ.

My intention several years ago was to study apologetics to strengthen and defend my faith in preparation for further ministry opportunities. I downloaded free Bible software (scripture4all.org) and used it as a tool to further my own Bible reading. When I began seeing discrepancies I began to read more church history to see when and why certain doctrines arose. Little by little many of my closely held beliefs had to yield to the beliefs of the first-century Christians. Is there a possibility that I am wrong regarding some of these things? Certainly! But my error is on the side of trying too hard to believe what the 1<sup>st</sup>-century church believed, and I do not see how to reconcile this with 4th-5<sup>th</sup>-century beliefs. They are incompatible. Therefore, I cannot in good conscience continue to turn a blind eye to what I now see as indefensible error, so I must move on, pursuing the original faith of the 1<sup>st</sup>-century believers.

### Conclusion

My advice to you, dear reader, is that if you are in love with orthodoxy at all costs, then stay away from serious books about church history and doctrinal history, and don’t check too deeply into the Bible text in the

original languages, as these words were understood at the time they were written. Orthodoxy redefines key words and ideas to conform to a later framework which rejects the Jewish context that was not according to supposed superior Greek philosophical knowledge. In short, the “ABCs” of orthodoxy are based on the words of Augustine, Basil, and the Cappadocian Fathers. The “ABCs” of the 1st century are based on the words of the Apostles, the Bible, and Christ.

May the “only true God” (John 17:3), who is the Father of His human Son, Jesus the prophesied Jewish Messiah, the last Adam who is anointed by God as the head of humanity, reveal himself in our hearts so that we may worship God in spirit and in truth.

“For as **by a man** came death, **by a man** has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he [Jesus] delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he [Jesus] must reign until he [God] has put all his enemies under his [Jesus’] feet [Psalm 110:1]. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For ‘God has put all things in subjection under his [Jesus’] feet.’ But when it says, ‘all things are put in subjection,’ **it is plain that he [God] is excepted who put all things in subjection under him [Jesus]. When all things are subjected to him [Jesus], then the Son himself will also be subjected to him [God] who put all things in subjection under him [Jesus], that God may be all in all**” (1 Cor. 15:21-28).

“Therefore **God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him** the name that is above every name, **so that** at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, **to the glory of God the Father**” (Phil. 2:9-11, ESV). ✧

## Never Ever Separate Jesus from His Teachings!

A form of teaching known as “dispensationalism” (an extreme version is “ultra-dispensationalism”) attempts to prove to you that Paul and Jesus did not preach the same saving Gospel. Sometimes Paul’s phrase “my Gospel” is mistakenly taken to mean that Paul had a brand new Gospel which was deliberately not the Gospel as Jesus had preached it. This idea is fundamentally not true!

Jesus came with the words of the New Covenant. In Matthew the teachings of Jesus are laid out in 5 blocks, each ending with the words “when Jesus had finished all these words.” Matthew is teaching us to think of Jesus as

the new and final Moses. Moses had given five books of the Torah. Jesus came with the New Torah, the New Covenant. It is based on the words and teachings of Jesus. Jesus without his teachings is not the real Jesus!

A person is identified by what he thinks, believes and says. The mouth speaks from the abundance of the heart (in Hebrew thinking the heart is not the seat of the emotions but the center of the whole rational personality). Jesus declared his purpose with the express words: "I must preach the Gospel about the Kingdom; that is the reason for which I was commissioned" (Luke 4:43). If you are claiming to be a follower of Jesus, that must be your over-arching purpose too. Jesus has left the earth and he continues his Kingdom-Gospel preaching through his properly instructed men and women followers. The NT is full of severe warnings that we must not just act like Jesus. We are to sound like Jesus by learning and preaching his Kingdom Gospel teachings.

Note carefully that when Jesus said that he was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel (Matt. 15:24), he did not mean that his teaching would forever be confined to them. Jesus expressly told us that his teachings were firstly to the house of Israel and then, when Israel had been fully exposed to them, they were to be delivered to the whole world!

The Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20) is not just for Jews! Jesus says to us all, "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the combined authority [name] of the Father, Son and holy spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you." He then promised to be with those who obeyed his instructions "until the end of the age." The end of the age does not mean, ever, anything but the future one and only, visible arrival of Jesus in power and glory,

When he comes back Jesus will resurrect (to life from death) the faithful dead of all the ages, and in company with the true believers who are alive at his future coming, we will all go up to meet the arriving King and then escort him in the direction in which he is headed — i.e. to Jerusalem (read, please, 1 Thess. 4:13-18).

He may well first organize the theocratic Kingdom in the wilderness and then proceed to march on Jerusalem and free it from the clutches of the final "Antichrist," "the Man of Sin." Jesus as Messiah will then be king, president over the whole earth. The whole world will be taught to submit to the authority of Jesus and the immortalized saints. The process of re-education will no doubt take some time. The then resurrected David, as prince, will rule with Jesus and the saints of all the ages (Ezek. 34:23; Rev. 5:10). The point of being a follower of Jesus, a Christian, is to train now to supervise the new society which will come into operation at the return of Jesus. The claim of "dispensationalism," taught or implied in a mass of so-called "evangelical" churches,

often known vaguely as "non-denominational" (really a cover term for a group more or less "Baptist"! ) is that the Gospel preached by Jesus is not really for you at all! But this teaching separates you from Jesus, the one thing no one must allow. Here are the stern warnings:

"If anyone advocates a different teaching/doctrine and does not agree to the health-giving words, namely those of the lord Jesus Messiah, and with the doctrine/teaching conforming to godliness, he is conceited and understands nothing, but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise, envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction between men deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain."

John is equally alarmed at "dispensationalism": "Anyone who goes too far [i.e., in the name of 'progress'!] and does not abide in the teachings of Messiah does not have God; the one who abides in that teaching, he has both the Father and the Son" (2 John 9).

Jesus was absolutely insistent on his teachings as the basis of the true faith: "Why do you call me 'lord, lord,' and you refuse to do what I say? Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you whom he is like. He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation on the rock" (the belief that Jesus is the Messiah, not GOD! Matt. 16:16-18; John 20:31; 17:3).

It is therefore a grand falsehood to say that Jesus came to teach the national house of Israel only. Certainly his teaching was directed firstly to Jews, while he was here on earth. But the holy spirit is designed to remind all of us of the words of Jesus: "All these things I have spoken to you while abiding with you, but the Helper [Advocate, Comforter], the holy spirit, which the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you." Also this: "He who has my commandments and keeps them is the one who loves me, and he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and disclose myself to him...If anyone loves me he will keep my words/teachings, and my Father will love him and we will come to him and make our abode with him. He who does not love me does not keep my words/teachings, and the word which you hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me" (John 14:21-26).

What was Jesus sent to do? To announce the Gospel of the Kingdom of God (Luke 4:43). Please listen carefully to preaching coming at you from various quarters. **Is the phrase "Gospel of the Kingdom of God" or "Gospel about the Kingdom of God" prominent and explicit? If not, you may wonder if the speaker has really understood Jesus and is following him. Without the Gospel of the Kingdom, properly defined, how is Jesus being preached?**

The very first command Jesus gave in public ministry was to announce what Jesus called "God's Gospel" (Mark 1:14). The subject matter was this: "The Kingdom of God is approaching, is near. You are to repent and believe that Gospel of the Kingdom." By no means are we to avoid Jesus by claiming that his words are not for us! God's Gospel is the same one Gospel found across the pages of the NT (8 times: "Gospel of God"). It is firstly about the Kingdom and then the "things concerning the name of Jesus." That is why Acts 8:12 is a fundamentally key Scripture to be used in "sharing" your faith with everyone. It perfectly describes the "mechanics" of the salvation process: "When they believed Philip while he was preaching the Gospel about the Kingdom and the name [authority] of Jesus, they were getting baptized, both men and women."

Please note carefully that they were not being asked by the evangelist vaguely to "receive Jesus" or even "believe in Jesus" or "ask him into their heart." The Gospel message which launched them onto the road which leads to salvation was quite specific and precise, and fully reminiscent of the Gospel-words of Jesus!

The command of Jesus to repent and believe the Kingdom Message was designed to be clear and simple. The Kingdom of God is firstly the great objective of the believer, which he must strive, with God's help of course, to enter. Jesus said, "Strive, fight hard to enter by the narrow door, for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and not be able...In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the Kingdom of God [not 'heaven'!] but yourselves being rejected...They will come from the east and west, north and south and will recline [at the banquet on earth] in the Kingdom of God."

In Mark 4:12, Jesus, when he gave the parable or illustration which he said was essential for understanding all the parables (4:13), emphasized the easy fact that **without believing the Kingdom Gospel message, one cannot repent and be forgiven!** Ponder that amazing saying in Mark 4:11-12: "And he was saying to them [often repeated]: 'To you has been given the mystery [God's now revealed, unfolding program] of the Kingdom of God, but those who are on the outside get everything in parables, with the result that while seeing they may see and not perceive, and while hearing they may hear and not understand. Otherwise they might return [repent] and be forgiven.' **Repentance and forgiveness of sin depend on an intelligent understanding and grasp of the Gospel of the Kingdom.** Without believing the Kingdom Gospel (Mark 1:14-15) one cannot "come to Jesus" or accept him. One cannot repent. This is revolutionary teaching from the lips of Jesus, the greatest rabbi of all time.

The "dispensationalist" system of much evangelicalism says not a word, in its evangelism, about **the Kingdom of God Gospel**. It thus sounds oddly unlike Jesus, while claiming to present Jesus as Savior.

But the saving blessings of Jesus are inseparable from his Gospel of the Kingdom, *and his death and resurrection of course*. The Kingdom of God is to be established worldwide on earth when Jesus comes back to take up his position on the throne of David in Jerusalem, for which he was born (Luke 1:32-33). This straightforward information has been overwhelmed and supplanted by promises of "heaven when you die." Our church language is saturated and laced with "heaven" and "going to heaven"! But this is false information, propagated constantly in sermons and at funerals. Tell your friends confidently (quoting a leading scholar from Cambridge) that "heaven in the Bible is never the destination of the dying"!

Do you see how much of what you hear in church and have passively absorbed from other teachers is after all not Scripture at all? You will find of interest the introduction to my *One God the Father, One Man Messiah Translation of the NT with Commentary*.

Here is what has happened, but are you learning about this in church?

"The Church diverged in discipline and dogma more and more widely from its ancient form [from Jesus!], till in the second century the Christians of Judea, who had faithfully followed the customs and tenets of the twelve apostles, were informed that they were heretics. During that interval a new religion had arisen. Christianity had conquered paganism, and **paganism had corrupted Christianity**. The legends which had belonged to Osiris and Apollo had been applied to the life of Jesus. **The single Deity of the Jews [defined in the creed of Jesus, Mk. 12:29] had been exchanged for the Trinity, which the Egyptians had invented, and which Plato had idealized into a philosophic system. The man who had said, 'Why do you call me good? There is no one good except one, that is God,' had now himself been made a god, or the third part of one.**"<sup>1</sup>

Professor J. Harold Ellens underlines our point, based on the very clear evidence of what the Church has done with its central figure: "It is time therefore for the Christian Church to acknowledge that it has a very special type of material which constitutes its creedal tradition. **It is not a creedal tradition of biblical theology**...It should be candidly admitted by the Church, then, **that its roots are not in Jesus of Nazareth**...not in the central tradition of biblical theology. Its roots are in Philonic Hellenistic Judaism and in the Christianized

<sup>1</sup>William Winwood Reade, British historian and philosopher, *The Martyrdom of Man*, 1892, p. 230.

Neo-Platonism of the second through the fifth century. Since this is so, the Church should acknowledge to the world of humans seeking truth and to the world of alternate religions, that the Christian Church speaks only with its own historical and philosophical authority and appeal and with neither a divine nor a unique revelation from Jesus Christ, nor from God.”<sup>2</sup> ✧

## Comments

- “I am a Christian who has been diligently studying and teaching the Bible for many years, and I have always believed the traditional views of the Trinity and the deity of Christ without seriously questioning them. Now I am reading Kegan Chandler’s *The God of Jesus in Light of Christian Dogma* and it is absolutely eye-opening — I can’t put it down! I am re-thinking the traditional views. I find it very helpful to read about the history of where doctrines come from. (In the past few years, I have come to the conclusion that the traditional view of hell as a place of eternal torment comes from pagan philosophy and not from the Bible.)” — *Email*

- “All my life I was feeling lonely and been outcast because of my world-view and deep beliefs that The One God is ONE. Even before I was able to study any of religions. Here in Ukraine traditional congregations are represented mainly by Orthodox and Catholics — both Trinitarians. All my life I needed a congregation, friends and more than friend with whom I can be in constant prayer, to be in deep relations and live my life freely — following my belief.” — *Ukraine*

- “I recently left my Baptist church and am entirely OK with it. The pastor visited and said it was his duty to reinforce that Jesus is God, and what I believe is heresy (one God, one Son). Thank you for your stand. I will point as many as I can to your site.” — *Australia*

- “I found out about your ministry after seeing your debate on Youtube in favor of unity instead of Trinity. Today I found your first newsletter, October 1998 on your **focusonthekingdom.org** site. Thank you for maintaining the issues and website. Such good, veritable and encouraging Bible study information.” — *Canada*

- “Having been raised in the Jehovah’s Witness organization for many years growing up, I took some time off from religion when I became older. Focusing on work and living my life, it was only a matter of time before I turned back to God. No matter how much I seemed to accomplish on my own, or at least at the time I thought my accomplishments were my own, something or someone rather was always missing — the Father Jehovah/Yahweh as well as a clear understanding of our Messiah Jesus Christ. I almost went back to the

organizational doctrines that had at best confused my intellect and wisdom and replaced it instead with mass doctrinal confusion.

“After many years of research, in part thanks to my loving, supportive wife, I began a personal life-quest, if you will, to find out as much information as I could about the Bible. I desired to grasp truth and push myself on a more scholarly level. I studied the name of God the Father and the Son in Hebrew, Greek and Latin. I researched all the many types and denominations of religion. I re-read the entire Bible again, only this time from a non-denominational perspective and from different translations besides the highly flawed New World translation. I researched intently on Sabbath keeping, feast days, holy days, the Torah and almost steered off course many, many times. However, one person kept me on track — Sir Anthony Buzzard.

“The first time I listened to Anthony was on Youtube when he was discussing biblical theology and pre-existence of Jesus with two Jehovah’s Witnesses. Being a previous JW myself this really appealed to me and made a lot of sense. I listened to many, many more teachings on Youtube, Restoration Fellowship and 21st Century Reformation. I understand so much more today than a month ago, more than six months ago and much more than a year ago. It is this knowledge and understanding that is going to lead me to baptism and staying on the *very* narrow course of the unitarian monotheist way just as our Messiah spoke about when he taught the *true* Gospel of the Kingdom. God’s Kingdom is the true hope of everlasting life for us to rule as saints/priest-kings with Christ as our King and Lord, worshiping the Father Jehovah/Yahweh.

“What a true blessing this magazine *Focus on the Kingdom* has been. I have talked to Anthony on the phone and he graciously answered any questions I had. I am looking forward to many more conversations with a true biblical scholar/mentor and true Christian as the New Testament says and by example of the Apostles. Your *One God, the Father, One Man Messiah Translation* is the best translation I have read and shines light on truth and expels scriptural darkness through denominational hindrances and mistranslation. *The Coming Kingdom of the Messiah* is also a highly recommended read and re-read! This is exactly what not only JW’s but all Christians should read in order to fully grasp and gain a clear understanding of the amazing and incredible Kingdom of God when our Messiah returns. May God’s Kingdom Come! God bless you all, brothers and sisters.” — *Mexico*

<sup>2</sup>*The Ancient Library of Alexandria and Early Christian Theological Development.*