

Focus on the Kingdom

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Anthony Buzzard, editor

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The Trinity No Longer Makes Sense

by Greg Deuble

A pastor who for many years vigorously promoted the orthodox view of God as Three now sees things in a completely new light. Some of his close colleagues do not share his change of heart (others are intrigued with his new insights). He replied to one fellow pastor as follows:

I now give some initial responses to your last e-mail and its 2 attachments. To do it justice I will attempt to be careful and thorough. We are dealing after all with the Truth of God as He has revealed it to us, and we are all held accountable for what we teach (James 3:1).

Let us take your “authority’s” assertion that the Being in Exodus 3 who spoke to Moses from the burning bush was Jesus in a preexistent, pre-human state. Your consultant links this episode with the Being who spoke on Mt. Sinai. He talks about “the angel of the covenant” and “the angel of the Lord” and “the captain of the Lord’s host” in this connection, also, and he makes the assumption that this must be Jesus, the Son of God in his pre-existent condition, because “no man has seen God at any time,” and this could not therefore be the Father.

I put it to you that this is a case of pure speculation on your “authority’s” part. I would go further indeed, and put it to you that your “authority” is proposing a view which is at odds with his Bible.

I know it appears to our western minds that the one in the bush who says, “I am what I am” is Jehovah Himself. However, Stephen in Acts 7:30 identifies the speaker as “an angel.” And in verse 35 Stephen again speaks of “the angel who appeared to him [Moses] in the thorn bush.”

Thus we have the inspired interpretation of these OT passages from one who was filled with the Holy Spirit and with wisdom and faith. His understanding was that the Being who confronted Moses was not Jehovah Himself, nor the Son of God existing before his birth.

The same is true of Moses’ experience on Mount Sinai. Stephen says it was “the angel who was speaking to him on Mount Sinai” (v. 38). Yet again,

when we read the Old Testament account the impression given is quite clearly that God Himself was the speaker. Hebrews confirms the presence of a divine agency when it states categorically that Israel received the Law through “angels” (Heb. 2:2).

These are classic instances of the principle of Jewish “agency.” When God commissions and sends a subordinate to speak and act for Himself, the subordinate is treated as though he is in fact God Himself. To oppose the “sent one,” God’s commissioner, is truly to oppose God Himself.

I was reading Acts 12 the other day — the passage where Peter is in prison. Suddenly the jail fills with light, and in verse 7 “an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared.” The angel speaks to Peter, slips off his chains and leads him to freedom.

Now when Peter recounts the details of his miraculous escape to the unbelieving saints in verse 17, who does he say brought him out? “He described to them how the Lord had led him out of the prison.” Who led him out? An angel or the Lord?

At this point, if you are going to be consistent with your previous correspondence such as in Acts 9, you will have to say that “the Lord” here means Jehovah and that Peter confessed a mere angel as Jehovah! But you know the answer. An angel led Peter out, but he was commissioned by the Lord, and thus the work was truly attributed to the Lord Himself.

Biblical agency! When are we going to submit to the Scriptures and recognize this simple fact of agency. There is no reason for us to remain blind.

Another matter. Your “authority” quotes 4 verses from the Old Testament to prove that “direct Biblical statements” tell us of the Deity of Christ: Micah 5:2; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1-3 and Hebrews 7:3.

Is his assertion correct? Let’s look at the first one in Micah 5:2. He is correct to say this was taken by the Jews as a remarkable prophecy of the coming birth of their Messiah. But his asseveration that it provides

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evidence for an eternally conscious and preexistent Jesus because it says “his goings forth have been from long ago, from the days of eternity” is most unfortunate.

The Hebrew phrase is *y'may olam*. It occurs later in Micah 7:14 and the same prophet does not mean here “from the days of eternity.” Deuteronomy 32:7, Amos 9:11, Isaiah 45:21, 63:9, 11 show that the phrase merely means “from remote antiquity.”

Take the expression as found in Deuteronomy 32:7: “Remember the days of old, consider the years of all generations, ask your father and he will inform you, your elders, and they will tell you.” This clearly does not mean “remember the days of eternity,” for it refers to days that can be recalled by the elders and the fathers. And this is the meaning in the other verses that I have cited.

In other words, what Micah 5:2 states is that the promise of the Messiah could be traced “to the distant past,” or “remote antiquity.” The KJV translation “days of eternity” quite misleadingly suggests the eternal personal preexistence of the Messiah, when all the prophet said was that the promise of the Messiah’s emergence in Bethlehem is from “the days of old.”

I do not need to go again into Isaiah 9:6 having already dealt with that in previous correspondence. The same for Hebrews 7:3 and Melchizedek. I will say this only of John’s prologue that the correct translation would go a long way to giving John Hebrew thinking, rather than imposing on him a western mind. Why not translate like this: “In the beginning was the word (lower case ‘w’) and the word was with God and the word was God. All things were made through it...” As I have pointed out, seven English translations before the KJV rendered the words as “by it” and not “by him.”

By putting a capital on “word” the KJV reveals the translator’s bias in favor of the Trinity, rather than a translation of what John wrote. John had no cause to think that the Son was alive before his begetting in the womb of Mary (Matt. 1:20; Luke 1:35).

We have already dealt with the question of whether Christ personally played a role in the creation of the heavens and the earth. In particular we have seen that Colossians 1:16-17 does not say “By him all things were created.” Rather, it reads, “*In him...*” which allows a completely different sense, namely, that all things were created with a view to him, for him, with him in mind. Christians were also “*in Christ*” before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4). Paul in this passage in Colossians is anyway focusing

on the new creation and the authority of Jesus over that creation.

I like your “authority’s” differentiation between *protokistos* and *prototokos*. The first means “first created” which does not appear in the NT and the second word means “firstborn.” This is true. However the meaning of *prototokos* is given for us in the context and from the OT background in Psalm 89 which your “authority” does not treat. He simply reads into it his own preconceived Trinitarian bias again. Let me show you.

Psalm 89:27 says concerning Christ, “I also shall make him my *firstborn*, the highest of the kings of the earth.” This is the Hebrew understanding of “firstborn,” and the context makes it clear that it refers to status, to position, to rank. The firstborn is “the highest of the kings of the earth.”

And the Colossians context is faithful to this understanding. The firstborn is the one *for whom* all things were created (v. 16). “And he is before all things...” That Greek word *pro* does not necessarily mean “before” in the sense of time, but “before” as in “above” or “superior” or “over.”

And I would suggest that it is this second understanding which is true to the OT meaning and Paul’s total context here, for he goes on to explain his meaning in verse 18. Here he says that Jesus is “the head of the body, the church.” He is talking all the way through about superiority of rank and position, not literal preexistence in time.

Verse 18 confirms this interpretation again: “And he is the firstborn from the dead, *so that* he himself might come to have first place in everything.” There it is again. First *place!* Rank, honor, position, superiority, or as per KJV “preeminence.” This idea that *prototokos* means priority in time and therefore relates to Christ’s preexistence (other than in the Divine Plan) is unwarranted and is read into the passage, not from it. Note, too, the reason for Jesus’ preeminence. It is because of his resurrection, “so that” he may come to have first place. It would be meaningless to say this, if in fact first place is due to Jesus because he has always been “Deity.”

I will tackle one more area your “authority” raises as proof of the conscious preexistence of Jesus — John 8:58. To start with, it is important to notice that Jesus did not use the phrase revealing God’s name to Moses from Exodus 3. At the burning bush God declared His name as “I am who I am,” “I am the Self-existent One.”

The Greek phrase in the LXX reads *ego eimi ho hown*, which is not the title claimed by Jesus. Further,

this simple phrase *ego eimi* is everywhere else rendered “I am *he*.” What Jesus had just claimed here was that Messiah’s day was a reality to Abraham through the eyes of faith. But Messiah “existed” as the supreme subject of God’s plan long before the birth of Abraham. “Before Abraham came to be, I am he” is a profound statement about God’s original plan for the world centered in Jesus, whom John can also describe as “crucified before the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8). If Jesus was “crucified before Abraham” he himself may be said to have “existed” in the eternal counsels of God, for he was appointed as Savior of the world before the birth of Abraham.

Jesus has not ruined the cardinal tenet of Judaism by introducing himself as “coequal God.” Jesus was loyal to his Jewish heritage and its strict monotheism when he declared that the Father “is the only one who is truly God” (John 17:3). Words could not be more decisive.

In fact, the majority of the translations since the KJV recognize this as the simple meaning of what Jesus said and meant by supplying in italics the word “*he*.” “I am *he*.” This is the correct sense, just as in the next chapter when the blind man is asked whether he is the one who used to sit and beg. He says *ego eimi*, and it means, “I am he” or “I am the one you are talking about.” Nobody would dare suggest that he too was claiming to be the “I am what I am” of Exodus. Yet that is the very forced understanding your “authority” would have us adopt. To confirm this as the true meaning, have a look at John 4. The woman at the well in verse 25 says to Jesus, “I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called the Christ); when that one comes, he will declare all things to us.” In verse 26, “Jesus said to her, ‘I who speak to you am [then even the KJV supplies in italics the obvious meaning] *he*’” (i.e., the Messiah, not God!). Really, this is elementary to any “authority,” and to teach otherwise seems quite reprehensible.

I have written enough for the time being. I submit the above, as you say, for your “enjoyment.”

Yours through faith in the One who was promised from remote antiquity to be our Savior and the Lord of all creation, our Lord Jesus Messiah. ✧

Jesus Denies His Deity

by Charles Hunting

Following verse 21 in John 10, the NAS Study Bible has a break and inserts a subject heading announcing that *Jesus Asserts His Deity*. In the verses following Jesus defends himself against the charge of blasphemy leveled at him by unbelieving

Jews. The statement which triggered the charge was Jesus’ claim in verse 30: “I and the Father are one.” The Study Bible goes on to note that 10:30 “reveals a great truth.” “The two are one *in essence*” which further “warrants Jesus’ ‘I am’ declaration in 8:24. The claim would reinforce Jesus’ claim that He was God and the *I Am* of Exodus.”

Did Jesus really depart from the monotheism of his Jewish heritage — especially when in John 17:3 he had designated the Father as “the *only one* who is truly God”?

A further note on verse 33 in the Study Bible supporting their thesis that Jesus “was God,” coequal with his Father, states, “The Jewish leaders correctly understood the thrust of Jesus’ words (that Jesus was claiming to be God), but their preconceptions and unbelief prevented them from accepting His claim (that He was God) as true.” It is the writer’s contention that the Jews’ perception of Jesus’ words should not be taken as an accusation that Jesus was posing as the eternal God Himself. And Jesus in fact explained the basis for his amazing claims.

This was not the first time that Jesus was accused, as Sidney Hatch points out. John 5:18 records a former argument with his Jewish adversaries. Here Jesus was under a death threat, since his opponents perceived that Jesus was calling God his own Father, making himself “equal with God.” Quoting Mr. Hatch:

“Although the Jews are angry at Jesus they did not have in mind that he is making himself equal with God *in the sense of essence or nature*. The Jewish mind does not work that way; whether in the mind of Jesus, his enemies, or even John as he writes this passage. To all of them there is only one Jehovah (Deut. 6:4). Such thoughts must be left to the Gentiles.”

Rather, the Jews see in Jesus’ words (John 5:17) a Messianic claim and it enrages them. In the matter of works — not nature — Jesus puts himself on the same level with God: “a special relationship exists between us.” Jesus was claiming to speak directly for God.

The NAS Study Bible has misunderstood what Jesus said. The authority of the religious establishment was threatened when Jesus answered the demand of the Jewish community to reveal who he was. “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly” (John 10:24). “Jesus answered, ‘I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father’s name, these bear witness of me...I and the Father are one’” (v. 25, 30).

“The Jews again took up stones to stone him.” The charge of blasphemy was hurled at Jesus because he was claiming special status as the Son of God. The religious Jews did not misunderstand him at all. The question at stake was Jesus’ extraordinary power over the people. He had threatened the very foundation of the religious hierarchy by the works he was doing and the crowds he was attracting. Jesus said clearly in verses 36ff, “If I do not the works of my Father, do not believe me.” He justified his amazing status by protesting, “do you say of him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said I am the Son of God?”

Neither John nor Jesus were promoting the “Deity of Jesus.” In view of all that is repeated thousands of times in singular personal pronouns attesting to the uniqueness and singleness of God as Creator, a claim to be both Son of God *and God Himself* would have been a theological bombshell and false to Jesus’ own quotation of the Shema (Mark 12:28ff). John said plainly in answer to our question as to why he wrote his Gospel, “but these things have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in his name” (20:31). There is not a hint that John was claiming for the Son equal status with the eternal God.

Jesus’ claims to Messiahship were enough to create fury among the Jewish establishment, and this ultimately led to a death sentence at his trial before Pilate. To the cries of “crucify, crucify Jesus,” Pilate said “take and crucify him yourself; I find no guilt in him.” “The Jews answered him, ‘We have a law, and by that law he ought to die because he made himself out to be *the Son of God*’” (John 19:7). To claim to be *Son of God*, not God, was to wave a red flag in front of the hierarchy.

The Jews certainly knew that the term Son of God in the Hebrew mind did not imply a claim to be God Himself. Adam, angels, Israel and even Christians are called Sons of God. To be Son of God means you are not God, but a representative of God.

Jesus appealed to their own Law in Psalm 82:6. “Jesus answered them, ‘Has it not been written in your law, “You are Gods?”’” The Amplified Bible captures the sense admirably:

“God stands in the assembly [of the representatives] of God; in the midst of the magistrates or judges He gives judgment [as] among the gods” (v. 1). Verse 6, “I said you are gods [since you judge on My behalf, as My representatives]; indeed, all of you are children of the Most High. But you shall die as men and fall as one of the princes.”

There was no claim to deity in this Psalm, only a reference to human agents of God. Jesus claimed a similar status for himself. His appeal to the parallel status of the human judges of Israel can only prove that Jesus saw himself as a unique *human* agent of God. That he thought of himself as “Deity” is out of the question. Jesus was no Trinitarian and nor should his followers espouse that post-biblical doctrine. ✧

Philippine Pastors and Bible Teachers Gather for a Seminar

75 million, most Roman Catholics, inhabit the 7,200 islands which make up the Philippines. A powerful law in favor of freedom of speech and expression makes these islands an excellent forum for frank talk about the Bible in relation to traditional Christianity. Christian TV demonstrates an unusual mixture of competing religious voices. Unbelievers would be justified in saying that Christianity presents a bewildering complex of conflicting views — all apparently in the name of Jesus. There is a TV preacher with 2 million followers who relentlessly promotes the “oneness,” non-Trinitarian view of God. Equipped with whiteboard and markers he labors to convince his viewers that the Son *is* the Father. After all did not Jesus come in the name of the Father? Must he not therefore be the Father?

This makes no sense at all to those who have not become members of his camp. But an enthusiastic public crowds into his daily TV sessions and hails him as something close to a prophet. Meanwhile the Iglesia Ni Christo, who look back to their founder and prophet Felix Manalo, present an opposing view of where the truth lies. Again with a massive following, and a non-Trinitarian Christology, they claim that no one can be saved outside their camp. All their church buildings are constructed on the same model, and they too spend hours on TV trying to persuade their audience.

Meanwhile the Roman Catholics control yet another station and feature all kinds of learned discussions about the history of saints and the history of Catholicism. Their Mass is a spectacle to produce awe and wonder as they offer the sacraments of bread and wine which are (as they think) nothing less than the actual body and blood of the Savior.

Charles Hunting and I spent a happy seven days among the hospitable Filipinos. Our Trinity book (*The Doctrine of the Trinity: Christianity’s Self-Inflicted Wound*) had been circulating amongst former Pentecostals and others for some years and a group of about 100 pastors and Bible instructors gathered from

islands all over to tackle issues like “Who is Jesus?” “Who is God?” and “What is the Gospel as Jesus preached it?” In the hope of following the teaching model of Jesus we encouraged questions and interaction of all sorts. Some of the concerns were striking: One man felt that he needed to go to a far-off museum to inspect for himself the original Greek manuscripts. He had lost faith in translations. We encouraged him by saying that probably 99% of all translations convey the sense of the original rather accurately. That 1% of verses, however, needs some special examination, particularly when issues of traditional creeds are concerned. Our audience was somewhat shocked that the NIV has Jesus “going back” or “returning” to God (John 16:28; 20:17), when the Greek text does not say that. Jesus “went to” God or “ascended” to Him. Further stretching of the text occurs in Philippians 2:5 where the NIV speaks of Jesus, incorrectly, as “being in very nature God.” What Paul said was that the human Jesus was “in the form of God,” not that he *was* God! Jesus was an image of his Father. He was the second Adam.

Some wanted to insist that the King James is the only “inspired” version. This is not true. Beautiful as its wording may be, it does not speak to us in the language we know today, and there are several older manuscripts now available to scholars, which had not been discovered in 1611. It is a kind of fear which binds a person to one translation to the exclusion of all others.

Our Filipino friends seemed content to spend hours in the study of the Bible. We presented the evidence for the strict unity of God — the God who speaks as “I” and “Me” thousands of times. We pointed out that if one believes that God has revealed Himself in language comprehensible to us, then He must be One and not Three Persons. The singular personal pronoun “I” cannot possibly mean more than one Person. And not one of the 3,800 occurrences of the word “God” in the Bible can be shown to mean “God in three Persons.” Clearly then the Triune God is foreign to the Bible.

This truth is fundamental to all good Bible study as is the knowledge that Jesus is the Son of God and not God Himself. Jesus is the agent of the One God and he perfectly and sinlessly represented his Father and spoke on His behalf. That is Jesus’ claim, and it is tragically obscured when he is “promoted” to a position which would rival the One God, his Father. Jesus certainly never intended such a thing. Neither he nor the Apostles were believers in the Trinity.

Radio stations are ready to air our daily fifteen-minute programs and we hope to make available study materials to increase these pastors’ grasp of Scripture as they prepare their flocks to inherit the Kingdom of God when Jesus returns. They now see that repentance is conditioned upon an intelligent reception of Jesus’ Gospel of the Kingdom (see Mark 1:14, 15; 4:11, 12) as well as on our acceptance of the death and resurrection of Jesus. We are to be reoriented to God’s future for us and for the whole world. We are never to be “moved away from the hope presented in the Gospel [of the Kingdom]” (Col. 1:23), and we are to expect to “receive the reward of the inheritance [of the Kingdom]” when Jesus returns (Col. 3:24). That future has nothing to do with “going to heaven at death,” but with being resurrected to take part in the Age to Come of the future Kingdom to be inaugurated at the seventh trumpet (Rev. 11:15-18).

The Life of the Age to Come (appearing less clearly in your Bible as “everlasting, eternal life”) is promised in that wonderful verse in Daniel 12:2. This text so beautifully instructs us that the dead are now dead and asleep in the dust (not playing harps in heaven nor being tormented in hell), awaiting the call of Jesus to awake to the Life of the Age (to come) (Hebrew, *Chayay olam*). Based on this verse the New Testament expression “Life in the Age to Come” provides the substance of the Christian hope. Daniel 12:2 is thus massively cited in the New Testament. No wonder that Jesus, speaking of his saving Gospel, said: “Unless you receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, you will not enter it” — i.e., be saved (Luke 18:17). ✧

A Gutted Gospel

Churchgoers appear to have been lulled into a false sense of security. Across the world the invitation to salvation goes like this: “Jesus came to show us what the Father is like. He lived a sinless life and showed us how to live. Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sins, and rose again. Jesus is the source of eternal life. Jesus wants to be the doorway to new life for you personally. The Bible calls him the Lamb of God (John 1:29). Jesus became the sacrificial Lamb offered for your sins. Jesus said: ‘I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me’ (John 14:6). He is waiting for you to make your decision. Admit that you are a sinner. Repent, turning away from your sins. By faith receive Jesus Christ as God’s Son and accept the gift of forgiveness for your sins. He took the penalty of your sins by dying on the cross as Savior and Lord.”

We invite readers to ponder this presentation of salvation. There appears to be a huge gap in the information: the words of Jesus about how to be saved are omitted. Jesus said: “Repent and believe the Gospel of the Kingdom” (Mark 1:14, 15). In the parable of the sower he declared that the reception of the word about the Kingdom is a condition of forgiveness: “If they did perceive and understand the word [of the Kingdom — Matt. 13:19] they would repent and be forgiven” (Mark 4:11, 12). What then, if the Kingdom Gospel is never put to them for belief?

Elsewhere Jesus said that “when anyone hears the Gospel of the Kingdom, the Devil comes and snatches away the word which has been sown in their hearts **so that they cannot believe it and be saved**” (see Matt. 13:19; Luke 8:12). No wonder then that the Messiah urged the greatest attention to his parable of the sower: “If you have ears to hear, listen!” He used to raise his voice when giving this warning (Luke 8:8). He also said: “If anyone does not receive the Kingdom of God as a child he cannot enter it” (Luke 18:17).

The invitation we cited above said not a word about the Gospel of the Kingdom and in fact gave no hint that Jesus preached the Gospel as well as dying for it. Repentance is not on our terms but on the terms announced by Jesus (Mark 1:14,15; 4:11,12). ✧

Art Linkletter and the Gospel

In an interview with Larry King the celebrated Art Linkletter, son of a Baptist preacher, spoke warmly of his love of life, work and learning. He remarked that he had not received any satisfactory answer from evangelist Billy Graham when he had questioned him: “Won’t heaven be awfully boring?” Art’s passion for activity and adventure seems to be the antithesis of the activity-less (apart from endless strumming of harps!) existence in heaven (as a disembodied “soul”). A few moments later Art returned to the same concern. “Doesn’t the Bible say that the meek will inherit the earth?” Larry King seemed unequal to the task of confirming or denying this truth, but the heart of Linkletter was clear: he has a tentative, at least, grasp of the real Hope of the Gospel as distinct from the nebulous prospect originating in the pagan philosophy of Plato that the “immortal soul” will return to the heavens. Worse still, this will be a disembodied existence, though, as we all know, it is through the *body* and its senses that we experience all that is Life. Perhaps Linkletter should embark on a new career at ninety: that of evangelist of the Kingdom of God to come.

Mary is Dead

“You are deceived, not knowing the Scriptures,” Jesus said to the Sadducees. His warning may be applied with equal force to today’s religious world. During a prayer group meeting in 1991, a Georgia lady sensed a supernatural spirit hovering in her living room. The lady said that she knew it was the Virgin Mary because God had told her previously that He was sending His mother to her. “There is too little faith here,” the female voice of the invisible visitant declared.

In subsequent years thousands of the “faithful” flocked to this lady’s residence to hear messages relayed to her by “Mary” in private. The messages were full of hope and faith and were based on the Ten Commandments. Millions of dollars were donated by devoted followers of these messages.

From the Biblical point of view, this exercise in “faith” was bogus. Scripture states that Mary is dead and buried awaiting the resurrection. How precious and liberating is the biblical truth which makes future resurrection the only way out of death — which is like unconscious sleep (Ecc. 9:5; Dan. 12:2; John 11:11, 14, etc.). (For an excellent exposition of the whole issue of what happens when we die, request from us the book by Warren Prestidge, a Baptist Bible College teacher from New Zealand: *Life, Death and Destiny* — \$8, which includes postage.) ✧

Comments

“I just finished listening to all of the 65 Real Audio messages regarding Death and the Resurrection ([at www.focusonthekingdom.org](http://www.focusonthekingdom.org)). I am very excited and energized at what I heard. Your study has helped me to understand God’s truth about death and what happens when we die. I look forward to the Resurrection and my great hope is that I will be taking part in the Kingdom to come. I pray that my name is written in God’s book of life.” — *Illinois*

“I have been steadily reading the books you have sent me. I am taking my time to make sure that I digest everything and research some of the more unfamiliar Scriptures in their context. I must say that I am really enjoying them and learning a lot from them. There have been a lot of convictions which I have had regarding the approach we should take to Scripture which I have never been able to articulate and you express them very clearly and succinctly. Some of the observations you make have confirmed things which I have often noticed and asked myself why no one else seems to be aware of or troubled by. Please be

encouraged to keep up the good work. I cannot express in words how much you have blessed me already.” — *England*

“I heard you for the first time, on WJIV Cherry Valley, NY, this morning 6/18/02 and was deeply moved by your comments concerning Martin Luther. I have held Bro. Luther’s reformation ministry rather loosely. Taking into consideration the day and age in which he lived, I am awed at his courage and conviction concerning truth. But that is where it stops. His comments concerning James and his disproportionate emphasis on Paul’s epistles have always bothered me. To touch his theology brings on more criticism than publishing a new Bible translation in English. In a day where objective truth is strained through grids of tradition, it was refreshing to hear you speak with authority concerning the Kingdom of God.” — *New York*

“Thanks once again for your insightful monthly newsletter. I have enjoyed each and every one of them. I especially enjoyed the article ‘Do You Understand What This Means?’ Also, I have begun listening to the audio recordings available on your website and am going (slowly because there are so many of them) through them all. Thank you for making them available. The only regret I have is that not one of my friends in my church is willing to take the time to listen to them. The stranglehold of Trinitarian dogma on the church today is just too great for them to even consider that what they have been taught to believe is wrong. As always, I must be very cautious when discussing these things as Trinitarian Christians are too quick to label anyone who does not share their view of Christianity as a heretic. Even though I would be proud to accept that appellation for the beliefs I hold, in order not to lose communion with them, I more often than not measure my words very carefully when speaking with them, and hope a few of the things I relate to them cause them to search the Scriptures to test what they have been taught. I just finished reading Rubenstein’s *When Jesus Became God*, which I thoroughly enjoyed, and feel that in many respects, we non-Trinitarians are experiencing the same persecution that the opponents of Athanasius experienced. I am truly saddened by the fact that I am unable to have communion with other like-minded believers here where I live. In any case, thanks once again for the support you and your website provide.” — *Florida*

“Thank you for pointing to Scriptures that truly show that what churches teach about the Trinity isn’t true. Your teaching makes so much more sense.

Besides, from what I have read of your materials online and in your book, from listening to your radio messages, you don’t lead anyone to be comfortable in a docile state of mind, accepting your facts as you have presented them. There is no need to, for God in His greatness explains it to us in His Bible as you have pointed it out so beautifully.” — *New York*

“I have been engrossed in your website. Thank God for you and the way in which you are able to simply and irrefutably make the case for a true Hebraic understanding of who God and Jesus are. I was originally a Trinitarian (as that is what I was taught), then through study I became convinced that the Trinity dogma was incorrect. I ‘shifted’ to the ‘Oneness’ (pentecostal) viewpoint for quite a while as it stands in denial of most ‘post-biblical’ definitions such as the eternal Son/God the Son/3 persons, etc. However, I came to realize that I was still ‘stuck’ with the confession that ‘Jesus is the Father’ which is, if anything, equally absurd. I guess the ultimate ‘sacred cow’ that I never considered questioning was that ‘Jesus is *somehow* God.’ Now I have finally come ‘full circle’ and seen what I *should* have noticed from the very beginning — that the ‘Deity’ references to Christ are few and far between and easily shown to be the product of mistranslation or as intending the elevation of Christ to a ‘God-like’ status (*not* the same as making him the ‘*only* True God’) and that the references to Jesus portraying him as only a ‘man’ are overwhelming in number and cannot be interpreted as anything more than just indicating a human being.

“Here is a quote from a Trinitarian source the likes of which you are certainly familiar with: ‘The Father begets the Son and the Son is begotten by the Father, but this “begetting” is not anything like the process of biological birth, which we understand as *an event*.’

“What an incredible statement! Not only is the doctrine of the ‘eternal son’ foisted on Scripture, but now the *actual begetting* of Christ in history is tossed aside as irrelevant to the origin of Christ. If this is not a flagrant denial of what the Scripture plainly says, in favor of what it does not say, I don’t know what is.” ✧

“No responsible New Testament scholar would claim that the doctrine of the Trinity was taught by Jesus, or preached by the earliest Christians, or consciously held by any writer in the New Testament” (Professor A.T. Hanson, *The Image of the Invisible God*).

For your calendar: the annual Theological Conference at Atlanta Bible College will be February 7-9, 2003. All are invited. More details later.