

Focus on the Kingdom

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The Promise to Abraham

From *The Coming Kingdom of Christ*, John R. Rice, D.D., Litt. D., Baptist editor of *The Sword of the Lord*, 1945, p. 27-29:

"Actually, of course, if Heaven for Jews will be on the earth, then Heaven for everybody will be on earth, as the Scripture makes plain..."

"I was taught as a child in Sunday School that at the second coming of Christ there would be one general resurrection of all the dead, saved and unsaved. I was taught that this planet would be burned up and destroyed and disappear. I was taught that there would be at that time one general judgment and that saved and unsaved would alike stand before God to be judged according to their works. In some mysterious way it was supposed that Christ would intervene in behalf of the Christians. Then the unsaved would be sent to Hell and the redeemed spirits would float around and sing and twang their harps in a golden city hanging in space in the 'Beautiful Isle of Somewhere'! How far away from the plain Bible teaching that is!"

"I was taught in the Sunday School (and the Theological Seminary only strengthened that teaching) that if the meek were ever to inherit the earth, they would have to do it in this life. I was taught that all the promises to Israel really meant the church, and that the promises to Jerusalem and Mount Zion really meant Heaven! I was taught that that golden age — when "they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks" (Isa. 2:4; Micah 4:3), and when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:9) — would be brought about by preaching the gospel, aided by schools, hospitals, good laws, peace treaties, inventions, and the developments of modern science! I believed that, despite the evidences of my senses and the testimony of history and current events, until I began to study the prophetic teachings of the Bible.

"Then I learned that God had promised to bring the Israelites back to their land to possess it forever, that Heaven, then, must be on this earth.

If God Set Out to Destroy This World

"Let us suppose that...the Lord prepares to strike the match or say the word that will utterly destroy

this whole planet. What a multitude is gathered, let us imagine, to behold that great event. But wait! I see an old man who walks like a king who comes forward to interrupt the ceremony. His face has the look of authority and his voice is bold as he cries out, 'Wait, Lord; You cannot destroy my property!'

"I can imagine the Lord might say, 'This man is a friend of mine; let us hear what he has to say. Speak on, friend, tell the people. What is your name? To what possession do you refer? What title do you hold to the property?'

"'My name,' says the venerable patriarch, 'is Abraham! From Ur of the Chaldees I came at Your command. To Canaan I came and the land You gave to me, teaching me by faith to know that I should afterward inherit it. To Isaac and Jacob You made the same promises, and all our days, though rich in gold and silver, cattle and servants, we lived as sojourners and pilgrims in tents, patiently waiting until we should inherit and possess forever our own land. This scroll in my hand, O Lord God, is a written deed to the land of Canaan, called by name, and signed by Yourself. It is a warranty deed, guaranteeing to me and my faithful children after me [see Gal. 3:29] — the children of promise — the possession of the land forever.'

"'You may burn up, if You will, the weeds and thorns and thistles. Destroy, if You will, all disease germs and insect pests, which have increased the curse on the land because of man's sin through the centuries. O Lord, You may shake down and burn the cities, for I look for another city which has foundations whose builder and maker is God. The elements may melt with fervent heat, but the land is mine; to me You gave it with the promise that I should inherit it with my seed. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"'

"If God wanted to please the ignorant and the scoffers concerning His prophecies, how would He face Abraham? The deed which Abraham has is the Bible."♦

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Getting Our Theological Premises Right

The opening words of the Bible introduce us to the supreme majesty of the God of creation. There is one who speaks with absolute and unchallenged authority as Creator. He is from the beginning and in the beginning. “In the beginning God created...”

It is one of the tragedies of Bible study that the meaning of the word God, *Elohim*, has suffered from the fatal tendency of man to embrace polytheism, the belief in *more than one God*. *Elohim* is grammatically a plural form. Readers will know of the word cherubim, with the same ending, meaning cherubs (plural). But Elohim when designating the One God of Israel and of the Bible is *not plural in meaning*.

An example from our own acquaintance is this: Do you insist that the word news, because it has an “s” on the end, is plural? When did you last say, “the news *are* good”? An elementary knowledge of language is enough to understand the elementary fact about Elohim: that though it is plural in its form, it is *singular* in meaning when describing the God of biblical monotheism (belief in One God).

How do we know this? Any lexicon of Hebrew (roughly the biblical equivalent of the Webster’s known to English speakers) states this fact with complete clarity. The fact is observable — and has been observed by countless lexicographers — in this way: The verbs which follow Elohim (the One God) are in the singular number. And thousands and thousands of pronouns, that is, substitutes for the noun, are in *the singular*. In addition, Elohim is said to be the same person as El (God) and Yahweh (the personal God of Israel): “For who is El but Yahweh? And who is a rock except our Elohim?” (II Sam. 22:32). Yahweh, God’s personal name, is constructed all of its 6,800 times with *singular* verbs and accompanied by singular personal pronouns.

“Elohim, though a plural form, can be treated as a singular, in which case it means the One supreme Deity...and conveys the notion of all that belongs to the concept of deity in contrast to man (Num 23:19) and other created beings [angels]. It is appropriate to worldwide relationships (Gen. 1:1), because there is only one supreme and true God, and He is a person... Strictly speaking Yahweh is the only name of God... Yahweh, therefore, in contrast with Elohim, is a proper noun, the name of a Person, though that person is divine” (*New Bible Dictionary*, J.D. Douglas, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, pp. 474, 475).

Language has unmistakable ways of telling us that a speaker is a singular individual. It uses personal pronouns of the first person singular. We all know this, formally or instinctively: “I” and “me” require no analysis, much less a theological dispute. Across the pages of the Hebrew Bible, the One God presents Himself as exactly one single individual, divine Person: “I.” That “I” “Me,” and “He,” “Him” has no equals. “None is like Him,” and “there is no other besides Him.”

Nehemiah 9:6: “You [singular, “Thou” in 1611 English] are Yahweh, You alone. You have made the heavens of heavens, with all their hosts, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them.” Psalm 83:18: “Let them know that You [singular] alone, whose name is **Yahweh**, are the Most High over all the earth.” Isaiah 43:10, 11: “You are my witnesses, says Yahweh, and my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He. Before me no El [God] was formed nor shall there be any after Me. I, I am **Yahweh** and besides Me there is no Savior.” Isaiah 45:22: “For I am El [God] and there is no other.” Psalm 18:31: “Who is **Eloah** but **Yahweh**? And who is a rock except our **Elohim**?”

El, Eloah, Elohim and Yahweh: These words designate the One and Only God of Israel and of the universe. The invariably singular pronouns which substitute for those divine names merely confirm the obvious. They communicate the truth that God is a single divine Person thousands upon thousands of times.

And yet — by a miracle of misinterpretation and misunderstanding — Bible readers have managed to miss the glaring fact about the One God and His singularity. They have supposed, under the influence of well-meaning teachers and the massive energy of tradition unexamined, that God is really two or three Persons, or as some maintain “personal distinctions.”

How is this muddle over who God is conceivable? One sample is found in groups whose origin is in the teaching of Herbert Armstrong and the Worldwide Church of God. Armstrong’s authoritative voice from the pulpit and radio, reinforced by constant repetition in the printed word, tract and magazine, backed by sophisticated propaganda skills, declared that Elohim is really a “uniplural” word, like “family.”

But Elohim is not a collective noun. Collective nouns, like nation, army, crowd, herd of cattle, row of trees, chain of mountains, tell us that many living beings or lifeless things are gathered as one unit. But Elohim is not that sort of noun. To present it as a word like “family” is false and misleading. Elohim

designates a single Person, not a group of Persons. Sometimes Elohim has a plural *meaning* and it is then correctly translated as gods. The pronouns associated with Elohim, *with plural meaning*, are also plural to reflect that plurality: “I said, ‘You [plural] are gods [Elohim]’” (Ps. 82:6). But there are no plural pronouns or verbs associated with Yahweh, who is Elohim. Would not 6,800 appearances of Yahweh as a singular word with singular pronouns and verbs convince us that the one God is never ever to be thought of as plural?

Jeremiah 10:10: “Yahweh is a God of truth.” Deuteronomy 4:35, 39: “Yahweh is *the* God.” Yahweh is a singular God and He is *the* God [Ha-Elohim], par excellence, “the only one who is truly God,” as Jesus said addressing his Father (John 17:3). If the Father of Jesus is “the *only one who is truly God*,” it would be a blatant contradiction of the words of Scripture to say that Jesus is *also* the true God! Throughout the New Testament the One God and Jesus are distinct individuals — as we would now say, “different people.” The Father and Son are as distinct as any two individuals. God is one, and Jesus is another. They relate to each other as “I” and “you,” Father and Son, and Jesus speaks of themselves as “we” and “us.” They are never said to be One Person, much less are they together called “the One God,” or the “true God.”

The term “God” (Elohim) is applied to judges in Israel (Ps. 82:6), to single pagan gods like Ashtoreth and Chemosh, and on one occasion to the coming Messiah (Ps. 45:6). In the New Testament the word “God” is referred to Jesus twice *for certain* (John 20:28; Heb. 1:8, quoting Ps. 45:6). But the Father of Jesus, the Yahweh revealed as a single divine Person 6,800 times in the Old Testament, is called “God” or “the God” over 1300 times in the Greek New Testament. When the New Testament cites an Elohim text, meaning the One God, it translates it into Greek as the singular word “*theos*” (God), never ever a plural word “*theoi*.”

This must prove that Elohim has no trace of plurality in its meaning when it designates the One God of Creation. How great then was the disaster when some announced on their own uninformed authority that Elohim in Genesis 1:1 is a “uniplural” word.

No lexicon, as far as we know, says that Elohim is “uniplural.” In fact we do not find the word “uniplural” in either the Oxford Dictionary or in Webster’s “Unabridged.” Was that word an invention? (Perhaps readers can help us track its origin.) If “uniplural” was intended to mean “collective” the sense would have been clear. But the

statement is false. Elohim is not a collective noun, and certainly, since it is nothing like the word “family,” it is not a “family name.” And yet thousands nodded approvingly as we sat through theology “101”, and biblical languages “101,” little knowing that our mentors were unequipped to teach us correctly the most fundamental meanings of the word “Elohim.” The correct meanings however were available in standard authorities. (But we argued that only we really knew! This is the height of arrogance.)

“Let Us Make...”

Much of our confusion came to us via Genesis 1:26. Overlooking some 20,000 occurrences of the words for God with accompanying and confirming singular personal pronouns and verbs, we were invited to latch on to four (only) appearances of the word “us,” connected somehow with the One God. “And God said, ‘Let us make man in our own image...’” With our false premise well in mind, that Elohim is really plural in meaning, we needed only to be reassured by Genesis 1:26 that the Elohim *family of Gods was at work*. Herbert Armstrong wrote with confidence about “two Gods in the One God Family.” There in Genesis 1:26, he said, they cooperated in the creation of man.

But of course nothing is said in that verse about “two,” nor about a Son. Furthermore the verb is in the singular: It was God who said, “Let us...” and then *He*, not they, performed the creative act. “Let us,” of course, means “Let me and any number of others take action.” The One God was in conversation with one or two or many others who are not here defined. Is it reasonable to imagine on this evidence that He was talking to *one* other, His Son? And if the Son was addressed, is he said to be a coequal member of a God Family? This would be in the highest degree unlikely, especially since Elohim is not a collective noun at all.

The One God is, as we have seen, constantly in the Old Testament a single Person. He is just that in Genesis 1:26. Why destroy the evidence of 20,000 texts with the evidence of four verses? This would be a startling case of poor judgment. Comparing our verse with Isaiah 6:8 we find another of the four “us” texts. The context informs us in verses 1-3 that they are angelic beings. Angels, when they appear, have the form of man, and can thus be said to be in the same image as man. Thus from the leading evangelical commentary of our day (*Word Biblical Commentary* on Genesis, by Gordon Wenham, Ph.D):

“I do not find the difficulties raised against the view that God was consulting the angels

compelling...When angels do appear in the OT they are frequently described as ‘men’ (Gen. 18:2). And in fact the use of the singular verb ‘created’ in v. 27 does in fact suggest that God worked alone in the creation of mankind [cp. Isa. 44:24]. ‘Let us make man’ could therefore be regarded as a divine announcement to the heavenly courts, drawing the angelic host’s attention to the master stroke of creation, man. As Job 38:4, 7 puts it, ‘When I laid the foundation of the earth...all the sons of God shouted for joy’ (cp. Luke 2:13, 14). From the Epistle of Barnabas and Justin Martyr [150 AD] who saw the plural as a reference to Christ Christians have traditionally seen this verse as adumbrating the Trinity [or Binity]. **It is now universally admitted that this was not what the plural meant to the original author.**

As an orthodox evangelical Wenham goes on to say that the New Testament sees Jesus as associated with the creation, a view which many others would question.

Jesus did not say “In the beginning *I* made them male and female,” but “In the beginning *God* made them...” And God, not the Son, rested after the work of creation (Heb. 4:4) and did not speak through a Son until the New Testament period (Heb. 1:1-2).

Isaiah 44:24 presents God as solo and unaccompanied at the creation — a privilege which I think should not be compromised in any way.

The facts of the history of Bible interpretation show that the idea of plurality in Elohim originates in a secondary Roman Catholic writer. His use of the plural ending on Elohim to show that God is more than one Person was opposed by leading scholars both Catholic and Protestant. It is a considerable paradox to realize that this misleading Roman Catholic tradition found new life when promoted by Herbert Armstrong as the basis for his whole understanding of the identity of God.

Roman Catholic Commentators

“The second principal authority which the Master of Sentences [Peter Lombard of the 12th century] adduces for the plurality of persons in the Godhead is Genesis 1:1. ‘In the beginning God created.’ In the original the noun Elohim is put in the plural, and the verb in the singular; the former signifying a plurality of subsistencies; and the latter [the singular verb] meaning a unity of nature. But this cannot be maintained, for the plural is here used for the singular...It is evident that the noun is to be taken as singular in meaning, as otherwise it would indicate many gods as many men. **Those err egregiously who would prove a plurality of divine persons**

from such passages. For the change of number does not arise from any mystery, but from an idiom. Such changes are made from the usage of the Hebrew language” (Tostat, *Op.*, Tome 12, *De Sanctissima Trinitate*).

“With the exception of Peter of Lombardy and Paul of Burgos, there has not been, amongst the Greek, Latin and Hebrew writers, one commentator worthy of imitation who has explained the word elohim of the Trinity [i.e. as a plural, applicable also to a Binitarian Godhead]” (Sixtus Senensis, *Bib Sanct. lib 5, note 1*).

“A certain catholic and learned writer is of the opinion that the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are **Gods** because in the OT the name of the Almighty is always expressed in the plural number, as Elohim, which he thinks ought to be rendered *Gods*. The doctrine itself I do not oppose, but convinced by other arguments, I acknowledge *this* argument to be not solid” (Turrien, *Clem Constit*, 3, 17. *Apud Sandium*).

Protestant Commentators

“From the words ‘God created’ our commentators in general deduce the mystery of the most Holy Trinity: the noun, as they conceive, denoting the Trinity of persons and the verb the unity of Essence — Unity in Trinity and Trinity in Unity. The reason assigned for this inference is that the expression in the original signifies not Gods, they created, but Gods, *He* created. The Hebrews however attribute this phraseology to an idiom of their language. For the plural words Elohim and Baalim (masters) are used of men and lords, in relation to *individuals*, as *adonim kasha* = lords (plural) oppressive (singular), Isa. 19:4, and elsewhere. I am loath indeed to countenance the Jews, unless when they have truth manifestly on their side. But from other passages of Scripture the doctrine of the Trinity can be more clearly and expressly established. And we must contend against our adversaries with stronger weapons than this [argument from Elohim], **if we would not, by ignorance of their language, expose ourselves to their ridicule.** I agree with the Jews in referring the usage under notice to a Hebrew idiom, but conceive that the plural noun is ascribed to God, chiefly in order to express the fullness of His excellencies, by which He diffuses Himself throughout the universe and exerts His majesty and power which are immense and inexhaustible” (Mercer).

“The argument taken from the plural noun *Elohim* joined to the singular verb *bara* is exceedingly poor. Since by the usage of their

language the Hebrews in designating honorable persons are elsewhere accustomed to employ the plural number for the singular. And this is not surely for denoting some divine mystery, but merely on account of dignity and aggrandizement" (Lambert Daneau, *Opusc. Theol.*, p. 2027).

"In 'Elohim created' it is thought that a mystery is concealed and that a plurality of persons is implied. For what reason? Because a plural noun is construed with a singular verb [cp. news is good; the sheep are good, the sheep is good]. This is partly true and partly false as to the sense. For when Elohim is spoken of one [person], its significance is singular, being used of the **one God** everywhere and of an **individual** angel, calf, idol and man [and thus of the individual Elohim]. And our opinion is demonstrated by other arguments. Both Jerome and Procopius call it a noun of the common number, because it is used of one God and of a plurality. But if this is true, and of this there cannot be any doubt, the argument drawn from the number falls to the ground; for when employed of an individual, what child would say that this noun has ever a plural sense? [and JHVH is an individual!] Who would affirm that there are various cities of the names of Athenoe, Theboe Salonoë, because these are each spoken of in the plural number? Who would deny that there is one supreme heaven, which the apostle terms the third and David the heaven of the heavens, because in Hebrew it is called *shamayim* in the dual form, or as preferred by Jerome in the plural? Who would infer that there are many *darknesses* because in Latin the corresponding word is not employed in the singular number? (*tenebrae*). There is equally a mystery — but which no one recognizes — in the plural *baalim* (lords). This word is sometimes used of one lord and having a singular sense; as well as in *adonim* (lords) when said of the One God. Because I have written that the noun Elohim does not from its termination signify the Trinity, I am accused of being a Unitarian Arian, when my adversaries should rather be called Sabellians (Modalists) since they make the holy spirit the spirit of himself and say that Christ was self-begotten and what is very absurd constitute a plurality in individual persons. For though they do not say so expressly, yet all of this necessarily results from their opinion. So true it is that 'when fools fly from one fault they run into the contrary.' And when unlearned men avoid errors they fall into others[!]" (Drusius).

"The weakness of the argument constructed by Peter of Lombardy has been acutely observed and clearly set forth by Tostat, Cajetan, Bellarmine, Sixtus Senessius, Calvin, Mercer, Pareus, Drusius

and De Muys who in an appendix to Bellarmine's Grammar produces many arguments to prove that nothing solid can be concluded from the plural form of Elohim" (abridged from Sixtinus Amama, *Antibarb. Bib. Bk 2*, pp 174, 175).

"Elohim: The first subject of Genesis and the Bible is God. The word is the second most frequent noun in the OT. It is derived from the common Semitic word for God, *il*. As here, Hebrew generally prefers the plural form of the noun, which except when it means 'gods,' i.e., heathen deities, is **construed with the singular verb** [interesting that when it is taken as a plural it refers to pagan gods!]. Though it has often been taken as a plural of majesty or power, it is doubtful whether this is relevant to the interpretation of Elohim. It is simply the ordinary word for God, plural in form and singular in meaning. Strictly speaking Elohim is an appellative, that is, it can be used of any deity. It is not a personal name, such as Yahweh, El Shaddai, Marduk or Chemosh. Nevertheless as with the English word God it often acts almost as a proper name...Elohim implies that God is the sovereign Creator of the whole universe, not just Israel's personal God" (Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary on Genesis*).

It is liberating to discover that our thinking has been darkened by misinformation! When the light of Truth comes to us, we can mourn over our careless acceptance of error and move forward. If we have been misled on such a basic issue as the definition of the One God, what else in our belief system deserves to be reevaluated?

It appears from the facts of Hebrew grammar and usage that God is strictly a single divine Person. Jesus is His unique Son begotten not in eternity but in history, in the womb of his mother Mary (Matt. 1:18, 20; Luke 1:35; 1 John 5:18, not KJV but NASV, etc.). God is not a family of two or three Persons. Much less can one "become God as God is God." Common sense should dictate that if we are born in time we cannot be eternal. God alone claims that unique position and any compromise of His unmatched Unity is an affront to His incomparable position as "the Only One who is truly God" (John 17:3).

There is after all, in the creed of Paul, a single divine individual. "To us [Christians] there is One God the Father" (1 Cor. 8:6). The biblical definition of God should be sought in those passages which directly address who God is. In contrast to the numerically plural gods of the pagans, Paul asserts: "There is no God except One. For even if there are so-called gods, even as there are many gods and many lords on earth or in heaven, yet to us

[Christians] there is One God, the Father" (1 Cor. 8:4-6). Extracting a simple idea from this creedal statement of Paul we have this: "There is no God except the One God, the Father." Paul then continues by placing Jesus next to the Father as the one Lord Messiah. With the other writers of the New Testament he has in mind the remarkable passage in Psalm 110:1 in which the Messiah is seated next to Yahweh. This verse is used by the writers of the New Testament as a golden text. It is alluded to some 23 times and this is by far a record number of "hits" in terms of New Testament appeal to the Hebrew Bible. In Psalm 110:1, the One God, Yahweh, addresses another individual. David penned what is called "the divine oracle of Yahweh to my lord." "My lord" is the Messiah as both Jesus and the Pharisees agreed as they discussed this verse in Matthew 22:41-46.

Since we know that Yahweh is the One God, the second individual obviously cannot also be the One God! And indeed the very words which describe the second person of Psalm 110:1 prove that fact. The inspired Hebrew text, confirmed as correct in the inspired New Testament, tells us the status of the "my lord" of David. Speaking under inspiration, as Jesus said (Matt. 22:43), David speaks of *adoni*, my lord.

The Bible very carefully informs us of the difference between God and man, that is between who is worthy to be accorded the title of full Deity and who is not. **The Messiah here is not given the title fit for Deity.** The text thus preserves the unique position of Yahweh who alone is the One God. "My lord" — *adoni* — is the proper title for a human (occasionally an angelic) superior. It is never the title for God. *Adoni* occurs throughout the Old Testament 195 times and tells us that the one addressed is not God, but a superior personage *other than* God. There is a similar word, on the other hand, which designates the One God and Him alone. That word is *adonai*. In all of its 449 occurrences *adonai* means the Lord God.

If the Messiah were the Lord *God*, the divine title would have been entirely appropriate for him in Psalm 110:1. What the Psalmist wrote was, "Yahweh speaks to the lord [Messiah, the king]." It is a readily available language fact that the two terms *adonai* and *adoni* function differently. The one is a reverend way of avoiding pronouncing Yahweh. *Adoni* is the proper way to address **non-Deity** figures.

Jesus, then, is the one Lord Jesus Messiah in 1 Corinthians 8:4-6, but he is carefully to be distinguished from his Father who is the unique and only God.

We encourage our readers to confirm the above facts for themselves. Remember that *adonai* and *adoni* are both forms of the word ADON = Lord. By itself the word ADON can refer to a human or a divine superior. But the Hebrew Bible meticulously reserves *adonai* for the One God and Him alone. *Adoni* informs us that the one bearing that title is not God. This is a marvelously clarifying feature of God's revelation to us all in Scripture.

Elohim is not a "uniplural" word. It is not a collective word like "family." Much less is it the family name of the "God family." There is no family of divine, eternal beings in the Bible. There is a unipersonal God, the One God of Israel and of Jesus. He desires our allegiance and has revealed Himself uniquely in the Son whom He brought into existence in Mary.

Should anyone still wonder if Elohim is a collective, i.e., "team" or "committee" word, consider this: Does a committee or team speak as "I"? Are teams or committees addressed as "him"? A family of Smiths all share one name, but when they speak as a family, do they say "I"?

The God of Israel is not a self-existing uncreated Family. Such a definition invites polytheistic paganism into the faith, and that according to a celebrated historian of church history is exactly what happened from the second century. When the early church fathers began to speak of the Son of God as "God," even if subordinate to the One God, the trouble and the confusion were under way. Thus "polytheism entered camouflaged into the church" (Professor Loofs). This trend is more than encouraged when God is said to be "two" or "three."

It is an amazing fact that writers of commentaries on Psalm 110:1 and tracts on the nature of God have very often provided erroneous information about the original words of Scripture in this precious verse.

Benjamin Warfield in a celebrated article on the Trinity in the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* speaks of "certain repetitions of the name of God which seem to distinguish between God and God." He then cites Psalm 110:1, where in fact the sacred text carefully informs us that God is speaking to another who is *not* God (*adoni*). In recent times, a booklet produced by the Church of God International, "Who, What is God?" states: "In Psalm 110:1 the Messiah is called 'Lord' (*Adonai*). But the word there is not *adonai*. If it were, the Bible would indeed present us with two Gods.◊

"I remember once having heard a sort of lecture on the miraculous cure of Bartimaeus' blindness, from perhaps the most popular preacher — I cannot add the most judicious — that has appeared in this island in the present century. From these words of the blind man ('Lord, I want to receive my sight'), the preacher inferred not only the Deity of Christ, but Bartimaeus' faith in this article. 'He could not,' he said, 'have given him the appellation "Lord," *kurie*, if he had not believed him to be God.' And yet Mary gave the same appellation, *kurie*, to Jesus when she took him for no higher person than a gardener. The same appellation was given by the jailer to Paul and Silas, the prisoners under his care, *kurioi*, lords. In the first of these places our translators have rightly rendered it 'sir.' In the second they render it 'sirs.' Indeed it is well known that both in the Greek version of the OT and in the New, the word, like the Latin *dominus*, or *signore* in Italian, is applied indiscriminately to God or man. I must confess I could not help concluding from this remark of the preacher, 'Either you must be exceedingly ignorant in regard to the book you claim to explain, or you treat Sacred Scripture with a freedom and artifice... [incompatible with] the sincerity of the Christian divine'" (Dr. Campbell, *Lecture on Systematic Theology*, pp. 489, 490).

Comments

"As someone who was raised Catholic, and then converted to a Baptist in my late teens (even having attended a Bible College), it was in 1999 that I began to have serious doubts about many of the beliefs that I had come to accept and take for granted.

"I was one day reading the Gospel of Luke and it suddenly dawned on me that on almost every page I was trying to make the text fit into my pre-defined system of belief. It seemed to me suddenly very obvious that the evangelical churches and I myself were not teaching the same Gospel which Jesus himself had taught.

"Over the next year and a half I determined to scrap everything I had been taught, and to the best of my ability simply let God teach me the truth of the Bible. This however is often easier said than done. It is sometimes so hard to see beyond things that have been drummed into us since childhood. Nevertheless, I began to arrive at the following conclusions:

"1) That there could be no real preaching of the Gospel without the preaching of the Kingdom of God which Jesus himself preached.

"2) That the soul is not immortal and that eternal torment is not taught in the Scriptures.

"3) That the common question of evangelism, 'If you died today are you sure you would go to heaven?' was totally without scriptural foundation. That our hope lies only in the resurrection and the future restored earth under the administration of the Kingdom of God.

"4) That the Trinity was not scriptural.

"There was, however, one piece of this puzzle which I could not seem to make fit; that was who then was Jesus? I could not accept that he was the second person of the Trinity. But I could also not accept that he was an angel, because the Bible seems to me emphatic that he was not.

"When I happened upon your website I was immediately struck by how much common ground I shared with you. But when I read your articles about the Person of Jesus and the nature of preexistence I nearly fell off my chair! As if in one monumental flash of truth so many problems were worked out, and so many questions answered, so much plain SENSE made of so many Scriptures!" — *Indiana*

"I will be dedicating some time to evangelism over the coming months, only this time I will be sharing the gospel of the kingdom! Please pray for us that we will find open doors and fertile hearts." — *England*

"I am writing to thank you so very much for your book *The Coming Kingdom of the Messiah*. It was a book I couldn't put down, because it said for me so many of the things I have felt inside but couldn't put into words. The simple way in which you lay out the two-pronged Gospel message is exactly what Christians all over the world need to hear preached — that Jesus did in fact die on the cross and was resurrected, and he is coming again soon to establish a literal, concrete Kingdom/World Government, in which we firstfruits have the unbelievable blessing of being kings and priests!" — *Texas*

"I wanted to take a moment to thank you for the work you have been doing on the Kingdom of God. I have been listening to your radio broadcasts and studying your written materials and I must say, I think the Kingdom is having a rather large impact on my life. For the first time I see a cohesion and purpose throughout Scripture which I never recognized before." — *New York*

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Focus on the Kingdom
May, 2002

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Radio Schedule for “Focus on the Kingdom”

International Shortwave/Internet

| Location | Station | Time | Frequency |
|-----------------|--|--|------------------|
| Internet | www.focusonthekingdom.org | All 260 radio programs available anytime | |
| China | Voice of China | 1200 UTC | 13.590 Mhz |
| Europe | Voice of Europe | 700 UTC | 5.975 Mhz |

U.S. Radio Stations

| Location | Station | Times | Sponsored by |
|------------------|-----------------------|----------------|--|
| Rossville, GA | WJOC 1490 AM | 5:15 p.m. M-F | |
| Big Rapids, MI | WBRN 1460 AM/100.9 FM | 8:45 a.m. Sun. | Blanchard Church of God |
| Grand Rapids, MI | WFUR 1570 AM | 10:30 a.m. M-F | Michigan Conference of the Church of God |
| Kansas City, MO | KCWJ 1030 AM | 11:30 a.m. M-F | Countryside Bible Church, Peculiar, MO |
| Albany, NY | WJIV 101.9 FM | 11:30 a.m. M-F | |