

Focus on the Kingdom

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Factions' Fractions: The Mathematics of the Ontology (Being) of God

by Jonathan Sjørdal

Given to all of us by our Creator is a deep desire to know Him, and understand who He is. There can be no greater subject of study than the ontology of God — who God is. At the heart of every religion and every form of worship is the need of the worshippers to know the nature of the one they worship.

Within the Christian factions, nearly all profess the belief in some manner of monotheism. This is understandable because the Bible says plainly in many places that there is one God:

“Hear, O Israel: יהוה [Yahweh, God’s personal name, some 7,000 times] our God is one יהוה” (Deut. 6:4).

“I am יהוה: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images” (Isa. 42:8).

“Have we not all one Father? Has not one God [Elohim¹] created us?” (Mal. 2:10).

“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Messiah Jesus” (I Tim. 2:5).

“You believe that there is one God; you do well: the demons also believe, and tremble” (James 2:19).

“And the scribe said to him, ‘Right, Master, you have spoken the truth: for there is one God; and there is no other except He’” (Mark 12:32).

“Now therefore, יהוה our God, I beseech You, save us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are יהוה God, You only” (II Kings 19:19).

“Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen” (I Tim. 1:17).

“And this is life eternal, that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus the Messiah, whom You have sent” (John 17:3).

¹ It is obvious from the equation of *Elohim* with the single Person, the *Father*, that *Elohim* cannot possibly have a plural *meaning* when it designates the one true God.

Once we see the scriptural evidence it becomes clear that the Bible is thoroughly monotheistic. The definition of **polytheism** is belief in or worship of more than one god. To evade the charge of polytheism, those who explain that God is two or three must shoehorn multiple entities into one. Factional wrangling over ontology has devolved into mathematical absurdity for one simple reason: trying to avoid the appearance of polytheism. Monotheism, the belief in one God, is unity. Splitting the unity of God into two or three or more parts necessitates doing violence to both mathematics and language. The result is confusion.

Doctrinal differences over the nature of God resulted in several factions that are at variance with one another. The major polytheistic faction in Christianity is called the Trinity. The doctrine of the TRInity is that we have a Triune God, that is, God is in three Persons, together making up one God. We read this in the famous credal statements from history:

The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (325-381)

“I believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

“I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

“I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins. I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.”

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The Athanasian Creed (5th century)

"Whoever desires to be saved should above all hold to the catholic faith. Anyone who does not keep it whole and unbroken will doubtless perish eternally.

"Now this is the catholic faith:

"That we worship one God in trinity and the trinity in unity, neither blending their persons nor dividing their essence. For **the person of the Father is a distinct person, the person of the Son is another, and that of the Holy Spirit still another.** But the divinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is one, their glory equal, their majesty coeternal.

"What quality the Father has, the Son has, and the Holy Spirit has. The Father is uncreated, the Son is uncreated, the Holy Spirit is uncreated.

"The Father is immeasurable, the Son is immeasurable, the Holy Spirit is immeasurable. The Father is eternal, the Son is eternal, the Holy Spirit is eternal.

"And yet there are not three eternal beings; there is but one eternal being. So too there are not three uncreated or immeasurable beings; there is but one uncreated and immeasurable being.

"Similarly, **the Father is almighty, the Son is almighty, the Holy Spirit is almighty.** Yet there are not three almighty beings; there is but one almighty being.

"Thus the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God. Yet there are not three gods; there is but one God.

"Thus the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, the Holy Spirit is Lord. Yet there are not three lords; there is but one Lord.

"Just as Christian truth compels us to confess each person individually as both God and Lord, so **catholic religion forbids us to say that there are three gods** or lords.

"The Father was neither made nor created nor begotten from anyone. **The Son was neither made nor created; he was begotten from the Father alone.** The Holy Spirit was neither made nor created nor begotten; he proceeds from the Father and the Son.

"Accordingly there is one Father, not three fathers; there is one Son, not three sons; there is one Holy Spirit, not three holy spirits.

"Nothing in this trinity is before or after, nothing is greater or smaller; in their entirety the three persons are coeternal and coequal with each other.

"So in everything, as was said earlier, we must worship their trinity in their unity and their unity in their trinity.

"Anyone then who desires to be saved should think thus about the Trinity.

"But it is necessary for eternal salvation that one also believe in the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ faithfully. Now this is the true faith:

"That we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son, is both God and human, equally.

"He is God from the essence of the Father, begotten before time; and he is human from the essence of his mother, born in time; **completely God, completely human**, with a rational soul and human flesh; equal to the Father as regards divinity, less than the Father as regards humanity.

"Although he is God and human, yet Christ is not two, but one. He is one, however, not by his divinity being turned into flesh, but by God's taking humanity to himself. He is one, certainly not by the blending of his essence, but by the unity of his person. For just as one human is both rational soul and flesh, so too the one Christ is both God and human.

"He suffered for our salvation; he descended to hell; he arose from the dead; he ascended to heaven; he is seated at the Father's right hand; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. At his coming all people will arise bodily and give an accounting of their own deeds. Those who have done good will enter eternal life, and those who have done evil will enter eternal fire.

"This is the catholic faith: one cannot be saved without believing it firmly and faithfully."

It has been said: "To deny the Trinity is to lose one's soul. To understand the Trinity is to lose one's mind." It is easy to understand the latter half of that statement by simply reading the Athanasian Creed and other such Trinitarian explanations. Witness the impossibility of the statement "Thus the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God. Yet there are not three gods; there is but one God." Trinitarian scholars would have you believe that three make one: $1+1+1 = 1$

But mathematics comes to our rescue, reminding us that: $3 \neq 1$ and $1 \neq 3$

In fact, the correct mathematical representation is: $1/3 + 1/3 + 1/3 = 1$

This suggests that each member of the TRInitarian Godhead is not God in his own right, but rather only a fraction of God — an odious conclusion to the Trinitarians, but inescapable. The concept of a Triune God suggests that God is one, but has multiple personalities; a sort of divine schizophrenia. This idea is biblically indefensible. The Bible consistently and vehemently condemns polytheism. One must search outside of the Bible to locate a threefold God.

Scholars in the Trinitarian camp appear quite comfortable with the statement that a triangle can be a circle. Even a child knows that this cannot be so, for triangles are made of straight lines, and circles are curved. But a Trinitarian will tell you that if you are looking at a cone, from the side it appears to be triangular in shape, but from the bottom it appears circular. Since it is the same cone that is being viewed in each case, then a triangle can indeed be a circle. This is an interesting thought, but a base violation of

language. The *projection* of the cone can be triangular in shape from the side, and the *projection* of the cone circular from the bottom, but in no way does that mean that a triangle IS a circle, assuming of course that we know what the meaning of “is” is.☺ Language is not perfect, but it is quite sufficient to describe the difference between these basic shapes. Trinitarians make use of this kind of contradictory examples because the Trinity is itself a contradiction and can only be explained and justified by other contradictions.

Words like “Almighty” and “completely” from the Athanasian Creed are superlatives. The word “Almighty” cannot refer to two beings simultaneously; otherwise might is shared and thus one or both is not Almighty. Similarly, “completely” cannot be also “partly.” Trinitarians explain that the Messiah was simultaneously “fully God and fully man.” The dictionary definition of “fully” is: “to the full; completely; entirely; thoroughly.” There is no ambiguity regarding the meaning of the word. Fully means 100%. It leaves no room for anything else. Trinitarians teach that the idea that he was simultaneously fully God and fully man is a paradox. A paradox is something that *seems* to be contradictory or opposed to common sense and yet is perhaps true in fact.

For example, we read the following description in Paul’s letter to Titus:

“One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, ‘The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies.’ This witness is true” (Titus 1:12-13).

Consider the apparent paradox in this passage:

- 1) A Cretian stated that Cretians are always liars.
- 2) Paul affirms that the statement is true.

If the statement is true, then the one who stated it was always lying. Yet if he was always lying, then how could the statement which he made be true? Paradox.

Once you unwind the logic of it, you can see that a Cretian himself stated that Cretians were always liars, and that Paul is simply confirming that indeed, such was consistent with his own experience with Cretians. Paradox explained.

The name of our God, יהוה, means “self-existent, eternal.” God is immortal. Man is mortal. “Immortal” means not mortal — incapable of dying. Immortal is the opposite of mortal. To claim that something can be fully one thing and also its opposite is not a paradox. It is a *contradiction* in language. There are rules to language. When you violate those rules, meaningful communication ceases and nonsense commences.

To avoid the contradiction, Trinitarian scholars have resorted to the “impersonal human nature”

argument, that the Messiah was not really a man, but rather God with a man wrapper around him. He didn’t really die (if language means *anything*, an immortal being cannot die); only his humanity died. Consider the implications of this line of reasoning: If a part of God came down to earth and cloaked himself in human flesh for a short time, and then jettisoned the flesh to return to being a fraction of the Godhead, then the journey of a physical man (a *real* man who wasn’t once God) from mortal flesh into immortal spirit in the Kingdom has not yet been undertaken. We would have no example of someone like us who died and was resurrected into the kingdom. Where then is our example? Where then is our hope?

Once it is understood that God is not three, one might consider the possibility that God is two. There is indeed another polytheistic faction in Christianity called the Binity, sometimes referred to as the Twinity.☺ It has few historical adherents or present-day supporters. The doctrine of the Binity is that there are two Gods, two beings who are individual, distinct, eternal, uncreated, each with his own personality.

In explaining this doctrine, it is often useful to refer to these two Gods as God #1 and God #2. The Binity teaching posits that at some point prior to the creation of the heavens and the earth, God #1 and God #2 mutually agreed that God #1 would be God the Father and God #2 would be God the Son. God #2 then became the Creator God, the YHWH of the Old Testament. He later divested himself of his God nature and became the man Yeshua the Messiah. When he died and was resurrected, he was restored to his God nature.

Binitarians would have you believe that two make one: $1 + 1 = 1$

But we know that $2 \neq 1$ AND $1 \neq 2$

Once again, mathematics comes to the rescue, informing us that: $1/2 + 1/2 = 1$

Again, fractional Gods, much like the Trinity. In fact, the Binity is known as the poor man’s Trinity. The Binity is the Trinity without the person of the Holy Spirit.

The Binitarian model suggests that the Messiah was born of Mary, a woman possessing an egg containing half the genetic material to produce a baby. One of the Gods, God #2, was transformed into a seed containing the other half of the genetic material that, when combined with Mary’s egg, resulted in the conception of the Messiah. Thus a complete individual personality (1) is combined with Mary’s contribution ($1/2$). Was the Messiah therefore a “ $1\frac{1}{2}$ man”?

God #2 (seed) + Mary’s egg = The Messiah
 $1 + \frac{1}{2} = 1\frac{1}{2}$

Did the Messiah have the same personality as when he was God #2? How could he, since an additional part of his DNA came from Mary? When he was resurrected, did he remain “1½ man,” or revert to his individual God personality that he possessed before he came to earth?

People have performed a good deal of mental gymnastics to avoid the ugly math just described. Perhaps half of the personality of God #2 was removed prior to his transformation into a seed so that the proper result ($\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2} = 1$) would result. Which half did he lose? Did he get it back when he became God again? If not, what happened to it?

Some have suggested that Mary actually contributed no genetic material. That is, she was simply an incubator into which was placed the whole God #2 transformed into an embryonic Messiah ($1+0=1$). The math works in this case too, but this scenario fails the test of Scripture which requires that the Messiah had to be our kinsman redeemer: “Yeshua the Christ our Lord, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh” (Rom. 1:3).

Jesus the Christ was literally of the seed of David because he inherited that genetic material from Mary. She was no mere incubator. She was his mother, in the normal, literal sense of the word.

Nimble as the re-definers of words profess themselves to be, “one” still means “one.” What then shall we conclude? When the Scriptures say that God is one, what do they mean? The simple truth is that the Scriptures mean what they say. God is one, not two or three. The beauty of the reflexive equation $1=1$ says it all. There is, was, and always will be one God. This is called unity or monotheism, the worship of one God. In fact, the meaning of the name of the one and only God יהוה is “He which was, is, and is to come.”

Exactly how then did the Messiah come to be? Quite simply, he was created by his Father, at conception. He had no prior existence except in the divine counsels (1 Pet. 1:20). Mary was his mother, and יהוה was his Father. The Son of God began his existence when he was conceived in Mary’s womb. He called himself the Son of Man and also the Son of God, but never God or God the Son. He was the promised Messiah, a very special man whose office was to be the kinsman redeemer sent to Israel. His life and death were planned before creation. He was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8). He died and was raised again by his Father, and sits at the right

hand of יהוה today. He is our example. He is our elder brother, the intermediary between us and our God. He is the basis of our hope: through him we know that it is possible for a man to overcome death and be raised to immortality by the Almighty God.

It is hardly surprising that none of the 4400 occurrences of “God” in the Bible means a Triune or Biune God.

The central truth of the Bible is that God is one. There is one God, indivisible. Monotheism requires no mathematical or linguistic gymnastics or contradictions. It is a faction without fractions. ♣

God and Jesus: Elementary or Complicated?

Anonymous

“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 3:18). Living things grow! Peter challenged the recipients of his letter to grow. The previous verses in the chapter introduce scoffers, the willingly ignorant, the unlearned, the unstable, and Scripture twisters. Beware lest their theories infect you. Their contributions are counterproductive to spiritual growth and will result in either stagnation or regression. They create aberrant teachings which corrupt and defile God’s people. They teach for doctrines the commandments of men. They must, at all costs, be warned against and avoided.

An example is the post-biblical development and aberration of Peter’s words, “our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” Originally, Christians and their leaders consistently used the expression God and Jesus. Notice the introduction in every one of the epistles. Paul, Peter, James, Stephen, Jude, and Jesus himself continually used the phrase. Theirs sounds like good company to me. Their formula pointed conclusively to the great Bible truth given by Jesus: “This is life eternal, that they might know You, the only true **God, and Jesus** Christ, whom You have sent” (John 17:3).

Gradually the demographics of the church changed. More and more members were Gentiles, partially converted from paganism. Fewer and fewer came from a Bible-based, Jewish background. Greek thinking infected the theology of the church. They developed mystical, allegorical interpretations of Scripture. The simple Father-and-Son relationship believed by Jesus and the first-century disciples was questioned, challenged, then amalgamated with ideas from the pagan polytheistic philosophies of the Greeks. Jesus was given titles foreign to him such as: God the

Son, co-eternal, co-equal, omniscient, omnipotent, I Am, and fully God. A church council, when the church was nearly 300 years old, voted. No longer was it God and Jesus. Now the official, orthodox expression became “God of God.” Further, those who believed “there was a time when Jesus was not,” or that “before he was begotten he was not,” were anathematized. A number of semantic gymnastics were necessary to accomplish this change. “Father” meant something different from its usual definition as did the words “Son,” “begotten,” and “one.” In time, “three” was also given a definition foreign to its natural meaning. Alas, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was replaced by our God and Savior Jesus Christ.² The faith of our fathers slipped from its purity and heaven must have wept.

The corrupters of truth could have been content to stick with the Bible alone. But, no, they went other places for wisdom. Just as Israel of old wanted to find out how the nations around them worshipped, so these individuals incorporated ideas about God from the Hellenistic religions of their environment.

Today, their descendants are satisfied with the growth that has been made. But, in the Lord’s mind it is not progress, but regress. It is a dishonoring view of Christ, not a higher view. I certainly would not be pleased if someone told me I was on an equal level in every respect with my dad. He had many extraordinary qualities which I will never be able to equal. And, of course, I came into existence after he did. That’s a big part of what a father is.

The “Jesus *is* God” theory blatantly violates the first commandment. It abuses God’s holy position. Scripture makes that clear. No one is equal to Him (Isa. 40:25). No one created the world but He (Isa. 44:24). He did this unaccompanied. We cannot claim to know more than God Himself, who recognizes no rival (Isa. 44:8). Mortal man emboldens himself to take from God’s inspired word and pollute its clear statements with concepts from paganism!

Jesus is coming for a glorious church, “not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Eph. 5:27). Unpopular perhaps and sometimes ridiculed though it may be, we should want to define our belief system on the basis of Scripture, not Councils. ✧

² See the KJV, Alford, Meyer and others who do not think Jesus is called God in Titus 2:13.

Professor Fredriksen,

I have read your interesting account of early Christianity and gained much from your research and vigorous writing. I do have an observation on a point which has been of concern to me as a teacher of New Testament and biblical languages. You say in *From Jesus to Christ*, p. 139, that Psalm 110:1 refers to the Messiah as *Adonai*. But this is not actually so. The Hebrew is not the divine title *Adonai*, Lord God, but *adoni*, my lord (RV, RSV, etc.), the non-Deity title.

It seems to me that this is a rather crucial issue, since the early Christians were not thinking of Jesus as the Lord God, as *kurios* = Yahweh, but as the human Lord Messiah (cp. Luke 2:11). *Adoni*, as opposed to *adonai*, is not the divine title in all of its 195 occurrences in the Old Testament.

The difference between God and man is surely no small matter! And Psalm 110:1 is the New Testament’s master Christological text, quoted constantly.

Thanks for your stimulating writing,
Anthony Buzzard

Dear Mr. Buzzard,

Thank you for this note. I have just grabbed my JTS TNK [Old Testament]: You are absolutely right. I made a mistake, my English transliteration is wrong (also misleading); and I will take advantage of your notice to me to fix this in the next printing. I am terribly grateful to you for bringing this to my attention. We all depend upon each other.

Yours with thanks,
Paula Fredriksen

Talking about the Kingdom of God

There is a good reason why many churchgoers have a very vague idea of what the Bible says about the future of our world. The truth is that Jesus’ teaching about a future Kingdom of God, a new divine world government, is extremely unpopular in religious academic circles. Academic theologians train pastors who teach churches.

Scholars would much prefer a Jesus who taught an ethic of timeless love and fellowship with God. They are much less enthusiastic about a God who promises to send His Son to introduce, by cataclysm, a new world order on earth. Yet Jesus promised his followers that they would inherit just such a new society on earth, the Kingdom of God (Matt. 5:5). Jesus never promised anyone “heaven.” He did say that a Christian’s reward is presently *stored* with God in heaven. That reward will be bestowed on believers when Jesus returns to establish the Kingdom of God on earth (1 Pet. 1:4, 5).

The reward is to inherit the promised renewed earth of the future, the Kingdom of God (Matt. 5:5; Rev. 5:10). Belief in a brand new world coming is the essence of the Hebrew prophets' message, and it is the heart of what Jesus taught under his banner: "The Gospel about the Kingdom of God" (Matt. 4:23; 9:35; Luke 4:43; Acts 8:12; 19:8; 28:23, 31).

If one reads scholarly analyses of the Kingdom of God in the teaching of Jesus it is easy to see that Jesus' emphasis on the Kingdom to come at his return to the earth is bypassed and ignored. Some scholars, finding this information about a future apocalyptic Kingdom uncongenial, argue that the disciples, in their misunderstanding of Jesus, must have read the future Kingdom of God back into Jesus' words and thus misrepresented him.

There is another scholarly technique by which the teaching of Jesus may be evaded. This proposes that Jesus did use language which sounds as if he believed in a great future intervention in the affairs of man, but that he used such language only out of deference to popular ignorance. He really meant something quite different. And what he meant is what we all anyway wish he had meant: a Kingdom *in the heart*, a gentle fellowship with God now.

Theology has some serious unfinished business. It must come to terms, courageously and candidly, with the fact that the Christian Gospel, as Jesus preached it, announces a coming catastrophic intervention by God to put an end to injustice and human mismanagement of the planet, to destroy those who are destroying the earth (Rev. 11:18). Jesus spoke always about the Kingdom of God, as did Paul. It is fascinating to observe how minutely Paul followed his lord in this matter. Jesus "welcomed [the people] and began speaking to them about the Kingdom of God" (Luke 9:11). Paul "welcomed all who came to him and preached the Gospel about the Kingdom of God" (Acts 28:30, 31).

But do Christians today follow this example? When did you last hear an evangelist on radio or TV invite people to "repent and believe the Gospel about the Kingdom" (Mark 1:14, 15)? I have seen scores of tracts claiming to offer the Gospel, which contain not a single reference to the Kingdom. When did you last share the precious information about the Kingdom and what we need to do to enter it when it comes?

Paul obviously expected church members to play their part in the propagation of the Gospel Message about the Kingdom. He noted that when he was in prison "most of the brethren...have far more courage to speak the Word of God [the Gospel] without fear" (Phil. 1:14; cp. Matt. 13:19).

It is our Christian duty to be evangelists for Jesus and his Kingdom. Timothy was instructed to "proclaim the Word [of the Kingdom, Matt. 13:19] at every opportunity" (II Tim. 4:1, 2). The treasure of the Kingdom message given to us (Matt. 13:11, 44, 46) is not to be hoarded. It is to be passed on to others who have perhaps no clear idea about the Kingdom.

A fierce judgment awaits those who do nothing with the talent they have been given. They don't just miss out on rewards in the Kingdom; they are excluded from the Kingdom itself (Matt. 25:28-30).

The New Testament is held together by a single core concept which provides unity to all its parts. The church will become unified again when it adopts this New Testament pattern of teaching.

The unifying heart of the New Testament is the *Gospel Message of salvation as it came from Jesus*. This Gospel is called the Gospel **about the Kingdom of God** (Matt. 4:23; 9:35; 24:14; Mark 1:14, 15; Luke 4:43; Acts 8:12; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31). It is known as the "Word" or Message **about the Kingdom** (Matt. 13:19) or simply the Message ("Word") or Message of God/Gospel of God (Luke 8:11; Mark 1:14, 15). Throughout the New Testament it is abbreviated to "the Word/Message." Sometimes it appears as "The Gospel," "the Gospel of Jesus Christ" (i.e., the Gospel which he preached as well as the Gospel about him). The same saving Message is called "the Message of the Truth," or simply "the Truth." In John's Gospel it is called "the witness" or "my [Jesus'] Word or Words/teaching." Sometimes in Paul's letters it is called "the Mystery," reminding us of Jesus' "Mystery of the Kingdom" (Matt. 13:11).

At present evangelicals strangely avoid the obvious content of the Gospel as the Gospel of the Kingdom. This is a departure from the teaching of the Lord Jesus whom they claim to serve. Revival will come when the Gospel of the Kingdom is made the center of all preaching. Ministries of all types can compare their own writing and preaching with that of Paul and Jesus. Could it be said of modern evangelicals that they "welcome the people and begin **talking about the Kingdom of God**"? (See Luke 9:11; cp. Acts 28:30.)

Talking about the Kingdom of God is one of the most satisfying activities a Christian can enjoy. It is nothing less than his duty as a servant of the Lord Messiah. What else ultimately matters other than gaining immortality in the coming Kingdom? ☩

Eternal Life

Standard Bibles have not yet caught up with the Jewishness of Jesus. Jesus and the Apostles did not speak of “eternal/everlasting life.” It is well known, in commentary and journal articles alike, that the Christian objective is “life in the Age to Come.” This wonderfully illuminating phrase originates in Daniel 12:2. Daniel described the Christian future as resurrection from the dead in order to gain “the Life of the Age [to Come].” In connection with that coming, post-resurrection Life, the New Testament speaks of salvation, inheritance, spirit, redemption and glory as “belonging to the Age to Come.” Once grasped, this phrase will root our faith in the *actual* promises of the Bible rather than in the alien prospect of a post-mortem disembodied life in “heaven,” to which so often we hear, most unbiblically, that the departed have “passed away.” In the Bible the dead are in fact dead. Only the *resurrection* predicted to occur at the return of Jesus can bring those dead back to life, as whole persons, equipped with a spiritual body, no longer subject to disease or death.

“This expression [‘eternal life’] occurs very frequently in John. Sometimes, however, he speaks simply of LIFE without the adjective (e.g. 10:10); but the meaning is the same, namely, **the life of the age to come**. The concept is synonymous with the Synoptic figure of the Kingdom of God. **It has nothing whatever to do with Platonic notions of life of a ‘timeless’ quality, which are quite foreign to Hebrew thinking**” (Alan Richardson, D.D., *The Gospel According to St. John*, London: SCM Press, 1959).

Comments

“I just wanted to say I really enjoyed hearing your program ‘Focus on the Kingdom,’ because you teach chapter and verse. We need much more of this. There are many, many out there who are confusing people today, giving them everything else except what is written. I really appreciate what you are teaching, very plain facts in very plain English — people can understand you.” — *Michigan*

“I want to thank you for your book *The Doctrine of the Trinity: Christianity’s Self-Inflicted Wound*. As a Trinitarian for 30 years and a teacher and elder in the church, it helped me when I recently restudied this doctrine. As you know, it is one of those beliefs you don’t question in the traditional Christian church today. The main reason I was challenged to study this particular doctrine was the charge against the Trinity as being a perversion of Hebrew thought by Greek

philosophy/theology. I’ve found this to be true with more than this doctrine.” — *Georgia*

“I have read and studied your Trinity book — and found it most helpful. Thanks very much! I am, at this point, convinced that there is one God and one Messiah (who is not God).” — *Mississippi*

“I have been enjoying the *Focus on the Kingdom* articles for about two years now. I enjoy the well researched articles and concise presentation of information. My theology has been undergoing a fundamental paradigm shift! I came across your information after submitting my theology to God in prayer, realizing that my opinions really would not matter anyway.

“I have pondered a point that perhaps you could address in future publications. This is the Catholic doctrine of Mary as ‘The Mother of God’ vs. Jesus as ‘God, The Son.’ In my limited comprehension, it seems the Protestant insistence on Jesus as God incarnate lends itself to this particular Catholic doctrine, a doctrine which Protestants strongly discourage. I look forward to future issues of your periodical.” — *Missouri*

“I just finished reading your book *The Doctrine of the Trinity* — very well done — I am amazed at the research that went into it! I shall do my part (as God leads) to spread the word, as I too believe there’s no ‘Trinity.’ God bless you as you work to prepare people for the Kingdom.” — *Alaska*

“I’m writing to thank you for the *Focus on the Kingdom*. I truly enjoy every one I’ve received. In fact I save every one. I’ve even made a few copies for two of my friends, to help them understand more truth. It seemed to make things much clearer for me — seemed to help my friends also. Anthony Buzzard as editor does a great job, really clears any confusion. Definitely knows the Bible!” — *South Carolina*

Available now, Anthony’s CD or tape: “What good is Jesus without his Gospel?” (\$3, free to overseas readers)

A One God Conference will be hosted by Ken Westby of the Association for Christian Development on July 25-27 at the Ramada Inn in Tyler, Texas (location changed). Speakers include Charles Hunting, Anthony Buzzard and Ken Westby. Further details at www.godward.org