

E-Herald of the Coming Kingdom

**The time has come, and the Kingdom of God is near.
Change the way you think and act, and believe the Good News.”**

Mark 1:15 GW

- YOU BE THE JUDGE AND THE JURY**
- THE SIGNATURE OF GOD**
- IT BEGAN AND BEGINS WITH KINGDOM PREACHING**
- THE PEACEFUL RELIGION OF ISLAM CONFRONT US**
- THE NEGLECTED NEW TESTAMENT CREED**

**DEDICATED TO SPREADING THE GOOD NEWS OF GOD'S COMING
KINGDOM TO BE ESTABLISHED WHEN CHRIST RETURNS**



Editor's Note

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Vision:

We often hear the verse quoted, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." It's interesting that that is not a good translation of the phrase. Rather it should read something like "Where there is no vision, the people go astray", or they are "muddled."

That appears to be a problem with which our churches are struggling. They are doing quite wonderful work on the foreign fields but the work among the states is quite stagnant, at best languishing. It may be that is because no vision has been lifted as a beacon to guide our churches in their service.

Casting a vision presumes having a leader who has a vision as a direction from God. It is not always a clear direction, or a distinct action, but a vision casting leader does lead in the direction that God has influenced him to go. Vision casting is not for the meek and timid. Unfortunately it is often the area that desperately needs a strong and bold visionary.

Without a vision of what God would specifically direct us to do, our churches continues to muddle along and try to do what they "think" God wants. Without vision each church or each group of churches may begin to stagnate. Often they begin looking inwardly, focusing on their own needs, which may or may not be productive for them. They keep doing what they have been doing and hope for different results. For a renewal to occur there will need to be someone to cast a fresh vision of what God is calling us to do. We can only hope that person will soon become evident to us.

Heritage Conference:

This very month our Church of God History Committee will convene its heritage conference at the North Hills Church of God outside of Springfield Ohio, over the dates of September 20-22. There's been much work put into this program and its work tends not to be just reports of history, but also indicative of possible future programming for our churches and General Conference.

The History Committee, in trying to ascertain their responsibilities, first focused on the history as they discovered interesting aspects of it. But as the years have gone along, it is becoming evident that it is more than reporting what has been, on what is and it is also focusing on the future.

The committee sees itself working in three directions: 1) is a focus and analysis of the **Past** as it has occurred; 2) it is to assess what is **Presently** occurring; and 3) to encourage and project toward the **Future**.

The committees expertise comes from the years of experience they bring to the issues. It is not that they are omniscient, but they have insights that may prove to be profitable, if they are considered. Paul himself wrote that the lessons in the Old Testament were written down for our benefit, that we might profit from them and learn from past mistakes, sometimes bitter mistakes.

The two days of this Conference would well be worth the time it would take for you to be there and benefit from the reporting and from the forecasting. There will certainly be reporting as we will have reports on the Korean work, but also the work in the Philippine Islands, and the work in Malawi and Mozambique and other regions of Africa. We will also hear reports on other missionary work on fields throughout the entire world.

But it is not just missions, for there are also reports, historical in nature, of families that have established churches, and ministries that continue with us today. We will be hearing from works by Cecil Smead and his family with two of their radio programs. His son John has graciously provided us with two of those

scripts for our use. He will also be reporting on the life work of his father. David Krogh, too, will be reporting on his own family as it began ministering from Nebraska.

There will also be an assessment and reporting of attendance trends among the Churches of God in the United States and Canada. This is research that has been lacking for some time and now is once again being gathered. This research and resulting analysis may be of great benefit to local churches as well as the personnel from the General Conference and College.

There is also a lengthy session devoted to a consideration of the Church Planting efforts in the past two decades. There will be involvement by some who were personally involved in those efforts, plus reports by others who were part of those church plants. Again with insights from them, the future programming may be most helpful in any renewal that is to come.

It behooves leaders of our churches, of our state and regional conferences, as well as of our General Conference to consider these insights as their work provides the actual working out of what may be suggested. We anticipate at least 3 of our 7 national Directors will be with us.

There is no charge for this conference as it is a labor of love for the work God has laid before the Heritage Conference committee, and what might be learned for the future. It would be unwise for this unique opportunity to be missed. You are encouraged to send representatives from your church to come and learn.

NCD:

One of the efforts already launched goes by the abbreviation NCD, which stands for Natural Church Development. It is a focus on the health of churches and insight into what might help them to be stronger and more successful, in however that might be defined. Gary Burnham is leading this effort on behalf of the General Conference and is available to train local workers in utilizing this tool for their own benefits.

Several regional groups are beginning to work with this programming, and time will tell how very valuable it may prove to be. There is great hope for its success. If you have interest, it would be wise to contact the General Conference for further details.

Prophetic Events:

It is astonishing to watch world political developments and to juxtapose them with prophetic elements from the Bible. It has always appeared that the Middle East, particularly around the Holy Land, is where future events will transpire. As Iran rises as a belligerent opponent to Israel's existence this has been predicted by God's prophets from of old. Now we see also that Russia and Syria are involving themselves in the political world of the Middle East.

The Arab spring that was anticipated in a positive light by leaders of the free world has been exposed now as led and dominated by the Muslim brotherhood. All across northern Africa as tyrannies were overthrown, what has replaced those tyrannies has been revealed as only another type of tyranny. Jesus, in some of the last things he said before he ascended to heaven, was that his followers should "watch." Presumably they should be aware of current events that bear on the subject. It certainly appears that we could be living in those end times. Jesus also told us that we could not know the precise time for He, Himself did not know nor did the Angels in heaven but only his Father and ours. But he did say that we should "watch."

"We Believe" Issue:

We continue to work on what we hope will be our October issue that we are tentatively titling "We Believe." It is an attempt to lay before you what we believe to be biblical positions on specific theological issues. We are asking for leaders from around the country to posit positions on these matters with which we all can agree and rally to in a unified expression of our faith.

Our move to this presentation is deliberate so that we can find consensus on these matters we consider essential to our understanding of "the faith."

Kent H. Ross

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John 1:29

THANK YOU AGAIN!

**Dear Heavenly Father,
I know what You think
Of all my good intentions
Without action .**

**I know what You think
Of all my planning, and praying,
And feeling, and saying-
Without doing .**

**I know, too, what You think of me
When I try to look big,
And appear what I am not .**

**I know also what You think of me
When I act like a spoiled child
That could not have his way;
When I get "out of sorts"
And spunky.**

**You want-You must have
Better than I have given You.
Yet sometimes when I know better,
I do the worse .**

**Thank You, Lord,
For another chance
To try again .**

**Tomorrow.
No, Lord, TODAY!**

YOU BE THE JUDGE AND THE JURY

By Pastor Mark DeYoung

Often times I have been challenged on what I believe and what the Scriptures say and many of the people, lay people, Pastors and University theologians, are well meaning in their challenges (mostly).

I want you to be the judge and the jury, based purely on Scriptural evidence as to who Jesus Christ claims to be. I'll be playing the part of the attorney.

In 3 passages of Scripture we are told that the witness of two or three will establish a given thing. I have a 7th Day Adventist Pastor that reminds me often of this. The first mention is Deuteronomy 19:15 (NKJV) "One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established." Then in Matthew 18:16 (NKJV) Jesus quotes this passage in Deuteronomy 19, "But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established." Finally in 2 Corinthians 13:1 (NKJV), Paul uses this established, even still in today's American court system, "This will be the third time I am coming to you. 'By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established.'"



So this morning let me present to you the evidence of who Jesus claimed that he was and still is today. Let's open our Bibles to the book of John chapter number 8. For this particular passage I am referring back to the Old King James Version, in the Modern and New King James Versions, as well as most of the newer versions of the Bible, the translators have taken Jesus words out of context and have attempted to make it say something Jesus did not say.

John 8:17-30(KJV); "It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. (18) I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me. (19) Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also. (20) These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come. (21) Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot

come. (22) Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come. (23) And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. (24) I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins. (25) Then said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning. (26) I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him. (27) They understood not that he spake to them of the Father. (28) Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. (29) And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him. (30) As he spake these words, many believed on him."



This passage is often used by theologians to try and point out that Jesus was making his "I AM" statements. The first time I was told this, was from the pastor that I grew up under, after he had just learned that I am a Biblical Unitarian, he had just stated to me that he was a true theologian with a Bachelor's Degree from Bob Jones University and a Master's Degree from Olivet Nazarene University. But upon closer inspection this well-meaning pastor, with a superiority complex, he misused and misstated what Jesus is actually saying in this passage, he did a good job of what theologians call "eisegesis" in reference to this passage.

So if this isn't Jesus making a bold "I AM" statement, what is he saying?

In this passage he has just said that he is the Messiah, which these people had been looking for, based on the prophecies of the Old Testament prophets and writers.

First he is establishing the passage from Deuteronomy that the witness of two (or three) makes any statement true.

Secondly, he is stating that his Father and himself bear witness that he is the Messiah; note that it says no man laid his hands on Jesus. Why? Because it wasn't his time to be crucified yet.

Thirdly in verse 21 he states that they cannot go where he is going, they assume he is planning on taking his own life, to commit suicide.

Jesus responds by saying that he is not of this world, he is saying that has a higher calling, which was to die for the sin of the whole world, if they would only trust and believe in his name, that they were not of this calling and could not understand the implications that this involved. He then told them that they would not believe and would die in their sins.

Next he explains to them that when he is "lifted up", then they will know that he was who he claimed to be, the Messiah, just as John the Baptist had proclaimed as the voice "calling from the wilderness". He already knew that he was to be crucified on a cruel Roman cross that he would be beaten within an inch of his life and still Jesus in his great love for the people of his era, as well as every era, was willing to suffer the shame, humiliation and pain that lay ahead of him in his quest to redeem the world to his Father. So, you be the "judge and the jury" what was Jesus claiming in this passage?

Next let's turn in our Bibles to John 20:16-18 (NKJV); "Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to Him, 'Rabboni!' (which is to say, Teacher). [17] Jesus said to her, 'Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to **My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.**" [18] Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her."

*"My Father
and your Father, and
to My God and your
God."*

John 20:17

To set the scenery Mary Magdalene has been left by Peter and John (the one whom Jesus loved) they had come early to the garden sepulcher to check on the body of Jesus, John states that they did not know the passage of Scripture from the Old Testament that stated he would be raised from the dead. So the two disciples went home and left Mary there in the garden alone. I can imagine her on her knees outside the sepulcher weeping due to the loss of the body of her beloved Jesus. Then she is spoken to by whom she initially believes to be the gardener, until Jesus calls her name, "Mary".

Then the pain and loss are gone! Why? Because Jesus is alive and he has just spoken to her! She is excited, she is jubilant! Her "Rabboni", her teacher is alive! He is no longer dead! I can in my mind, imagine her jumping up and down, dancing as the realization becomes more and more real to her!

Then she reaches out to hug him and Jesus stops her and says, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to **My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.**" Hold it!

(I can in my mind hear a needle from an old record player scratching across a vinyl record!) What did Jesus just say?

Did he say what I think I just heard him say? He is ascending to **HIS FATHER AND HIS GOD**?! (Who just happens to be our Father and our God?!?)

So you be the "judge and the jury" what was Jesus claiming in this passage? Also as "judge and jury" who is John claiming that Jesus is in these 2 passages?



Our next few passages this morning comes from Paul, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, a Pharisee, and most importantly in these passages an Apostle of Jesus Christ.

Romans 15:5-6(NKJV); "Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, [6] that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify **the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.**"

2 Corinthians 1:2-3(NKJV); "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. [3] Blessed be **the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,** the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,"

2 Corinthians 11:31(NKJV); "**The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,** who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying."

Ephesians 1:3(NKJV); "Blessed be **the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,** who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,"

Ephesians 1:14-23(NKJV); "who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory. [15] Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, [16] do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: [17] that **the God of our Lord Jesus Christ,** the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, [18] the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, [19] and what is the exceeding greatness of

His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power [20] which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, [21] far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. [22] And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, [23] which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."



What is Paul saying about Jesus and who Jesus truly is? You be the "judge and the jury", what is Paul saying about our Lord and Master, Jesus the Christ? Finally, let's call one last witness to take the witness stand; I think we should call Simon Peter.

1 Peter 1:1-9(MKJV); 'Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect sojourners of the Dispersion of Pontus, of Galatia, of Cappadocia, of Asia, and of Bithynia, (2) according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, to obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. May grace and peace be multiplied to you. (3) Blessed be ***the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ***, who according to His great mercy has regenerated us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, (4) to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and unfading, reserved in Heaven for you (5) by the power of God, having been kept through faith to a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time; (6) in which you greatly rejoice, yet a little while, if need be, grieving in manifold temptations; (7) so that the trial of your faith (being much more precious than that of gold that perishes, but being proven through fire) might be found to praise and honor and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, (8) whom having not seen, you love; in whom not yet seeing, but believing in Him you exult with unspeakable joy, and having been glorified, (9) obtaining the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

What is Peter saying here? You be the "judge and jury", what is Peter saying about our Lord and Master, Jesus the Messiah?

For our closing arguments this morning, we have the testimony of Jesus and who Jesus claimed he is, and who he is not. That was part of John's (the Beloved) testimony as well in referring to Jesus.

Then we heard repeatedly from Paul, the one who initially hated and sought out the Christians of the early church to arrest and have put to death. Paul shares who he knew Jesus to be, and who Jesus was and is not.

Lastly we heard from Simon Peter, loud, boisterous Peter, the one who seemed to act before thinking throughout the ministry of Jesus; the one that on the night Jesus was arrested tried to force an insurgence to save the life of his teacher and his friend, but only was successful at loping of the ear of one of the guards. Peter shares with us who he knew Jesus to be and who Jesus was not.

This morning we could even use the testimony of God, the Father and the God of Jesus, who is also our God and our Father that we have read in the first passage from the book of John this morning. Is Jesus, God?

Or is the testimony of these witnesses, which there is not only two or three, but five testimonies as to who Jesus is and who Jesus is not. Six, if we include Mary Magdalene! Based on the law, both of the Bible and of the United States of America, Jesus Christ, our Messiah, the one that died that we might have life eternal in the Kingdom of God (Revelation 21 &22), so that we can say with confidence and with the power of God, that Jesus Christ is none other than who he claimed to be, the second Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45), a creation of God.

But clearly Jesus is not God the Son, the second of the Trinity, a part of the Godhead. He identified God as his God!

Your Honor, I rest my case!

You be the "**Judge And The Jury**"!



"Who, according to the Bible, was eaten by a whale?"

The confident answer was, "Pinocchio."

The Signature of God

By Wally Winner

Bible knowledge just might be at an all-time low. Jay Leno likes to prove it every now and then. He frequently does man-on-the-street interviews, and one night he collared some young people to ask them questions about the Bible.

"Can you name one of the Ten Commandments?" he asked two college aged women. One replied, "Freedom of speech?"

Leno said to the other, "Complete this sentence: Let he who is without sin..." Her response was, "have a good time?"

Leno then turned to a young man and asked, "Who, according to the Bible, was eaten by a whale?" The confident answer was, "Pinocchio."

We are living in a time of paradox in America. On one hand, there is the growing opinion that objective truth does not exist. But on the other hand, we are hungering for truth as never before. While many reject the concept of objective truth, they explore a web of avenues in order to find the truth that will work for them.

Every year the hottest selling tabloid newspapers that infest the check-out lanes of grocery stores are the yearend editions which contain all of the prophecies by self-proclaimed psychics for the upcoming year. The prophecies range from the goofy to the bizarre to the absurd. I hated to help propagate the tabloids, but I purchased several different publications one year and kept them to see how the predictions actually turned out. None of them did. Not one! Nevertheless, "inquiring minds" scoop them up like gold nuggets and pore over them as though they were gospel.

It seems there is always an interest in the future. People tend to wonder what the future holds for them. It's true in our day and it was also true in ancient days. Anytime a person purported to see the future, he could immediately get a crowd. In ancient days, people used a variety of means to try to be able to predict the future. Sometimes they would look into the entrails of animals supposing





that there they could find the future. Others would resort to crystal balls, trying to find what the future was going to bring.

One of the most famous oracles of ancient days was the Delphic oracle. People would go to the Delphic Oracle and they would get a message that would supposedly tell them what the future was going to bring. The King of Lydia went to the Delphic Oracle to find whether or not he should enter into battle with Persia. The oracle said, "Go to battle with Persia. A great empire will be destroyed." He took that to be a favorable prophecy to his cause. The King of Lydia invaded Persia and indeed a great kingdom was destroyed: his own. People have tried to predict the future with very little success.

Today, people are very anxious to know what the future is going to bring. Daily, people pour over horoscopes trying to find out what their future is, not understanding that their future is not in the stars but in the scriptures. People turn to psychics who are supposedly able to tell them what their future will bring.

The latest fad going around is known as channeling. This channeling is of those who claim to have contact with spirit entities. These entities are able to tell them about their future and about their life.

If you are wealthy enough, you can call psychic hot lines, and astrologers advertised on television who promise you all you need to know for success in business and love. And people seem to be flocking to these astrologers and these psychics like sea gulls to a shrimp boat.

And in the face of all this, the Bible has been under severe attack. The Bible was supposed to have been dismantled by the theory of evolution, destroyed by Marxism, and disproved by scientific knowledge. However, just the opposite is true. Evolution is a theory in chaos. Marxism has collapsed under its own weight. And science is only confirming Christian truths rather than disproving them. The Bible has outlived every critic and stands today stronger than ever before.

"The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever" (Isaiah 40:8).

"For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven" (Psalm 119:89).

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35).

Jesus said, "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24).

Jesus said, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have

*"Heaven and earth shall
pass away, but my words
shall not pass away"*

(Matthew 24:35).

I believe that the Bible is God's word. Now, you notice what I said. I didn't say it contains the word of God. I believe it is the word of God.

eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39).

Peter said, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Peter 1:21).

Paul wrote to Timothy and said, "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through the faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (II Timothy 3:15-17).

Long, long years ago Moses said to the people of Israel, "And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thou fathers know; that he might make thee know that man does not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live" (Deuteronomy 8:3).

I believe that the Bible is God's word. Now, you notice what I said. I didn't say it contains the word of God. I believe it is the word of God. Now, if the Bible just contains the word of God, then how do we know which part of the Bible is the word of God, and which part is not? How do we know what to believe, or how do we know if we ought to believe it at all? Is it the word of God, only if it speaks to my heart? Or is it the word of God, period.

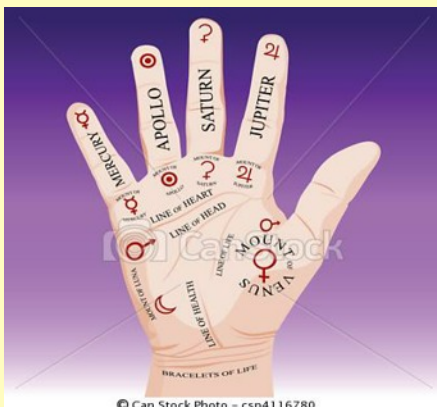
This is the word of God. It is not idealized mythology. It is not a book that contradicts itself. It is infallible. It is in perfect harmony with itself. It is authoritative. It is not fiction. It is not fantasy. It is factual. It is not a myth. It is a miracle.

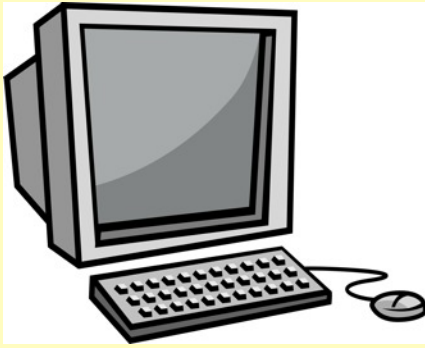
The Bible makes it very clear that there is only one who is able to tell the future and that one is God. God says, "I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure" (Isaiah 46:9-11).

It's a dangerous thing to be able to predict the future. It's a dangerous thing to claim that you can predict the future.

I read about a traveling preacher who came upon a fortune teller. The fortune teller said to him, "If you'll cross my palm with silver, I'll tell you what you'll be doing tomorrow." The preacher said, "I'm not sure you can do that, but I'll cross your palms two times with silver if you can tell me what I was doing this time yesterday." Needless to say, the deal was off!

Only God is able to predict the future. God lays down the gauntlet to all of the gods of the world. In Isaiah, chapter 41, God issues a





challenge to false gods and says in verse 22, "Let them bring them forth, and shew us what shall happen: let them shew the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come."

There is only one book that predicts the future and that is the Bible. None of the others religious books of the world ever risked the matter or prophecy. If a book makes predictions and they do not come to pass, then you know immediately that the book is false and discredited. Yet, when you read the Bible you will discover that over and over again the Bible makes predictions.

A computer study was done some time ago of all of the verses of the Bible. It revealed that one-fifth of all of the verses in the Bible touches on prophecy and that one-third of those has to do with predictions concerning the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus. There are a total of 333 predictions of the First Coming and Second coming of the Lord Jesus in the Bible. Of those, 109 predictions refer to the First Coming of Jesus. These predictions are matters of history and we look back upon them as historic fulfillment.

Thomas Paine, the infidel of an earlier age in America, said, "The study of theology, as it stands in Christian churches, is the study of nothing; it is founded on nothing; it rests on nothing; it proceeds by no authorities; it has no data; it can demonstrate nothing and admits of no conclusion (Thomas Paine, *The Age of Reason* (1793-5), quoted from Jonathon Green, *The Cassell Dictionary of Cynical Quotations*). He also believed that the fulfilled prophecies about the First Coming of Jesus were obviously inserted into the New Testament narrative. His reasoning was that they were too accurate.

Fulfilled prophecy is one of the greatest indications that the Bible is indeed the literal written Word of God. What do you think are the mathematical probabilities of all these 109 prophecies being fulfilled in one person - the Lord Jesus Christ?

A student at Massachusetts Institute of Technology figured out the mathematical probability of the chances of a monkey running across the key on a typewriter and typing out a Webster's Unabridged Dictionary. He said that the probabilities of that occurring were 1 in 10 raised to the 68th power. That means a 1 with 68 zeros behind it. I don't know how he came up with it, but that's what they concluded. He received his master's degree in part on this research.

There was a man named Nathan Stoner who wrote a book, entitled "Science Speaks". He was a scientist and a mathematician. He did mathematical probabilities on the fulfillment of the prophecies of the First Coming of Jesus. Dr. Stoner took eight prophecies of Jesus' First Coming. For instance, number 1, where He would be born, which was in Bethlehem, as Micah said; and number 2, how He would be born, which was of a virgin, as Isaiah said. He said that the probabilities of those eight prophecies being fulfilled by one

Fulfilled prophecy is one of the greatest indications that the Bible is indeed the literal written Word of God.



person was 1 in 10 raised to the 110th power. That's a 1 with one hundred and ten zeros after it. That doesn't mean a great deal to me. When I get past my fingers and toes I've done about as much figuring as I can. I want to use an illustration that might give you a little idea of what we mean by 1 in 10 raised to the 110th power.

Suppose we take that number of silver dollars (1 in 10 raised to the 110th power) and lay them on the face of Texas. Now, as you know, Texas is a big state. If you could flip Texas west using El Paso as a hinge, Houston would land in the Pacific Ocean. If you could flip Texas east using Houston as a hinge, El Paso would land in the Atlantic Ocean. If you could flip Texas north using the top of the panhandle as a hinge, the lowest part of Texas would land just short of the Canadian border. Texas is a big state. This many silver dollars would cover the entire state two feet deep in coins.

Now, imagine that one of those silver dollars was painted red. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel anywhere in the state he wants to pick up that one silver dollar. Keep in mind that traveling at seventy miles per hour, he could not drive across Texas in a day. His chances of getting the marked silver dollar are approximately the same as a person fulfilling eight major prophecies of the Messiah by chance. Then consider 48 more prophecies that Jesus fulfills. The odds that any one man fulfills all 48 by chance are one to the 157th power. There is no practical way even to illustrate that number. Consider, we have 109 fulfilled prophecies we can point to in regard to Christ's First Coming. What would that number be? When you look at the fulfilled prophecies in the life of Christ, the Bible becomes a very convincing book, and Jesus becomes a very convincing Messiah.

When we read the Bible, we read just exactly what the Old Testament writers said about the first coming of Jesus. They were fulfilled literally. Everything God predicted about Christ's First Coming came to pass! Most of the prophecies have to do with the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. There are 224 prophecies of the second coming.

All prophecy is intended to tell about the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is the sum and the substance of all predicative prophecy. It all converges on the Lord Jesus Christ. When the Bible predicts that He is going to come the second time, we immediately become interested.

The Old Testament writers are unanimous in their statements that Jesus will come again. Job predicted His coming when he said, "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand in the latter day upon the earth" (Job 19:25). The Psalmist, David, predicted that Jesus would come again. "When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory" (Psalm 102:16). Isaiah predicted that the Lord would come again. Zechariah predicted that Jesus is going to come again. "And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount

"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand in the latter day upon the earth" (Job 19:25).

"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation"

(Hebrews 9:28).



of Olives" (Zech. 14:4).

Sometimes, these Old Testament writers seemed to see the First and Second Coming of Jesus Christ as one event. It is only when you come to the New Testament that you discover what they put together is in actuality separated by several thousand years. They were all in agreement that the Lord was going to come. They all agreed that one day Jesus would return. The prophets of old saw the suffering and the glory of Jesus together. This is why the Jews in the days of Jesus had such a difficult time understanding the return of the Lord and the First coming of Jesus.

When John the Baptist was put in prison he sent word to Jesus saying, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" (Matthew 11:3). John had read the prophecies about His glory, but somehow he overlooked the prophecies of His suffering. In Luke 24:26 Jesus says, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" The Old Testament prophet said he would come the first time. He did come the first time to suffer and die and to be our Savior. He's going to come the second time, not to suffer but to rule and reign. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Hebrews 9:28).

The New Testament writers proclaim the Second Coming of Jesus. John predicted that Jesus would come. "And now, little children, abide in him; that when he should appear, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming" (1 John 2:28). Jude predicted the Second Coming of Jesus. In Jude 1:14, he says, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints." James predicted the Second Coming of Jesus. He said, "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord" (James 5:7). Jesus Himself promised that He is going to come again!

A father who had his daughter and his little son out in a boat on the ocean one day, relaxing and having a good time together. A sudden storm came up on the sea and the boat was capsized. The father was not able to rescue both of them. The little boy and girl were holding onto the boat. Knowing he could not rescue both of them at the same time, the father took the little girl and said to the boy, "Now, son, you just stay right here. You just hold onto this boat and don't be alarmed. Daddy will come back to get you." The father swam back to shore with his daughter. When he got to shore he told some people there what had taken place. They got a rescue boat and went out there. It took them a long time to locate the little boy. The father was a bit concerned and wondered if the boy would be alarmed. He wondered if perhaps the little boy would panic and let go of the boat and try to swim to shore, which would be impossible for him to do. After awhile, the father and the rescue party saw the capsized boat and the little boy, calmly holding onto the boat. When they pulled the little boy into the boat the father said, "Son, I'm so proud of you! You did so well! You did just



exactly what I told you to do! I'm so pleased that you were not alarmed but calm when I arrived for you. How could you stay so calm?" The little boy looked up at his daddy and said, "You know you told me you'd come back and get me. You said, 'Just be calm and you'd come back and get me.' You never lied to me before and I didn't think you'd lie to me this time."

Jesus said He's coming one of these days. That is the sureness of the return of Jesus Christ. "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war" (Rev. 19:11) "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thes.4:16).

There was a man who went visiting to a palace one time. There was a gardener who was keeping the gardens absolutely spotless and gorgeous. The visitor said to the gardener, whose master was away for a period of time, "My, you're keeping that garden so clean and neat. You must be expecting your master to come tomorrow." The gardener looked up and said, "Oh, no, sir. I'm not expecting him to come tomorrow. I'm expecting him to come today."

Is the garden of your heart clean? Are you living in anticipation of the coming of our Lord and Savior, the Lord Jesus? The Bible says we ought to live in the light of His coming. We ought to live, looking for that glorious appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock crowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping" (Mark 13:32).

Do you want to be sleeping spiritually when Jesus comes? It's going to be soon and you don't want to be caught napping. We want to be watching for the Lord to come. We want to be looking for the soon return of Jesus.

If Jesus should come tonight, would YOU be ready? What are the probabilities of His coming? If 109 predictions of His First Coming came to pass, actually and literally just like God said in the Word it would happen, then don't you doubt for a moment that Jesus is going to come again!

Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock crowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping"

(Mark 13:32).

WELCOME TO OUR
Church of God



September 20-22, 2012

Hosted at and by the

North Hills Church of God

2950 Moorefield Road
Springfield, OH 45502

COG History Committee

**Jan Stilson & Arlen Rankin,
Greg Demmitt, Jennifer Winner
Kent Ross, Coordinator**

“The Best Indicator of the Future is the Past”

2012 HERITAGE CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Thursday, September 20

- 1:15** Registration at North Hills
- 1:45** Welcoming Convocation – Kent Ross
- 2:15** David Krogh - History of Church of God in Blair, Nebraska; the Ministry of Harvey U. Krogh, Jr.; and Church of God Family Connections.
- 3:15** Break
- 3:45** “Tales from Europe”- Dan & Sharon Gill
- 4:30** Larry Rankin & The Philippines Story
- 5:30** Philippine Banquet
- 7:00** “The Smead Radio Days” – Ensemble
- 8:00** Fellowship & “More On the Philippines Story”- Larry Rankin

Friday, September 21

- 8:30** Coffee & Gathering
- 9:00** “A Look Back at Our Junior Quarterlies from 1957 and On”- Kent Ross
- 9:45** Myra Hamilton – Church of God Educational Materials Considered
- 10:15** Break
- 10:45** Open Forum on Christian Education in Our Churches
- 11:30** Greg Demmitt – Following the Development of the MRB, or A & O Board
- 12:15** Korean Lunch
- 1:00** More on the Marsh Family Story

- 1:45** Jan Stilson and Peter Hemmingray on the English Connections & the Age-to-Come
- 2:30** Steve An & the Korean Work
- 3:15** Break
- 3:30** John Smead on His Father, Cecil Smead
- 4:15** Joe Martin & David Krogh - Our Foreign Work
- 5:00** African Malawian Banquet
- 7:00** “Africa Calling 2012” Joe Martin
- 8:00** Coffee & Conversation

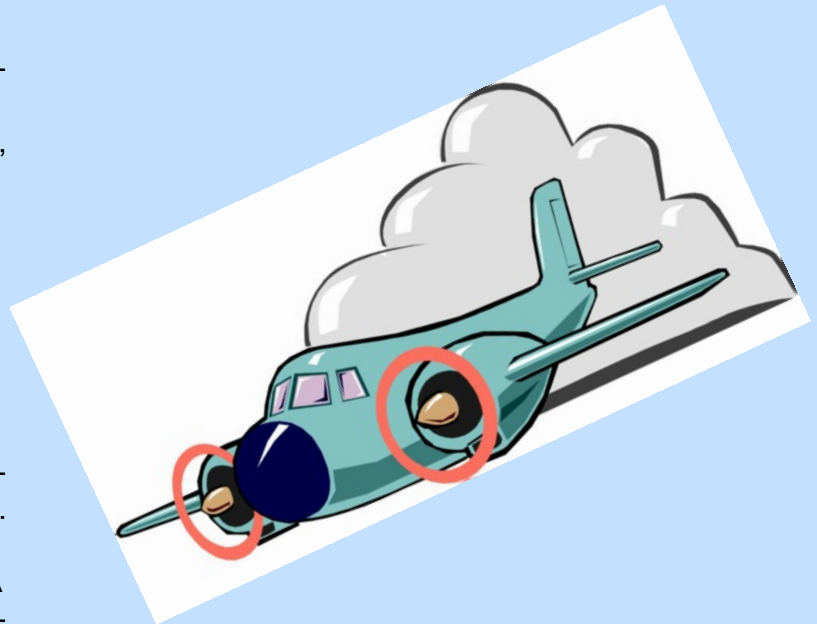
Saturday, September 22

- 8:30** Coffee & Gathering
- 9:00** Kent Ross and Guests - "On Church Planting Experiences in the Church of God"
- 10:30** History Committee Open Forum
- 11:30** Lunch at Church

IT BEGAN AND BEGINS WITH KINGDOM PREACHING

By: Richard Eldred

Consider an airplane pilot coming on the intercom and announcing to his passengers the following information: "Ladies and gentlemen, we have plenty of fuel, the weather is great, we are making good time. The problem is, we are lost in the fog and we have no idea where we are going."



Today, many in the world are lost in a 'religious fog'. Some would tell you that all religions are valid. You have your belief; I have mine. If you want to follow Buddhism, Islam or Hinduism it is your choice. They all believe in a god. They all have their good points, it is your choice. A

number of years ago I heard Hillary Clinton make the statement, "Bill and I don't just celebrate Christmas, we observe Ramadan and Hanukkah too." That is not just 'religious fog', that is D-U-M - STUPID. Evidently, according to Hillary, they are all credible religions worthy of honor. Lost in the fog!

Even within the Christian religion, those who believe Jesus Christ is the only way to eternal life, many have a foggy view of what the future holds. The return of Jesus the Christ to establish the Kingdom of God here on earth is our "blessed hope" (Titus 2:13). Yet some Church leaders and teachers never mention it. I had a conversation with a priest about the return of Christ. I said, "Don't you teach the return of Christ?" He said, "It could be thousands of years." It wasn't even a remote part of his thinking, he was oblivious to the fact that Christ is coming to be King of Kings and Lord of Lords as He establishes God's Kingdom on earth.



Let me give you another example of twisted foggy thinking: A few years ago while hauling steel I was making a delivery. I got to talking with a young man about the return of Christ (Every door that comes open, I stick my foot in). He believed in Christ and seemed to be quite sincere. He openly disputed the return of Christ to earth. I quoted from Acts chapter one that, "Jesus was taken up into the clouds, but would come again just as the men had seen Him go into heaven." He said, "He is only coming back as far as the clouds, he is not coming all the way to earth." Again I quoted Scripture, "When His feet stand on the Mount of Olives it will split in the middle from east to west" (Zech 14:4). He said, "I will bring you a verse to prove he is not coming to earth." The next time I saw him he had a verse from the King James Bible, "...thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption"

(Acts 2:27, emphasis mine). He said, "The world is corrupt and he can not come back to a corrupt world." I said, "That simply means that he would not stay in the grave and decay." He discounted my firm stand on Scripture for his own distorted 'foggy' explanation of the word 'corruption'.

Like the young man I just spoke of, I was raised in the fog. Not in the religious group that he is involved in, but I never heard a word as a youngster in Church about the coming Kingdom of God. It wasn't until I began to date my wife Carol and attend the Church of God in Blanchard that I heard about the King and His coming Kingdom. I sucked it up like a sponge in a pail of water. What a simple, logical, beautiful and understandable truth. It is so evident that the central theme of the Scriptures is about a King and His Kingdom. Since learning this and falling in love with the true message of Scripture, I now tell people from traditional teachings to 'QUESTION EVERYTHING WITH BOLDNESS'. If they will come with an open mind, not defending what they have been taught, but seek the truth, God will lift the fog and remove the blinders. We must be seekers of the truth, not defenders of tradition.

One of the greatest joys of my ministry is my good friend and brother in Christ Barth Gorby. When I met him he was a back-sliden Baptist. He hadn't been in church since he was a teenager. I talked with him about the resurrection of believers and the coming Kingdom of God on the earth. He went home to get his Bible out, that he hadn't looked at for years, to prove me wrong. I gave him some verses to look up also. The good thing was, he was seeking to know the truth. He didn't have the religious blinders on that so as many others do. He looked at the verses I had given him and God opened his spiritual eyes and he began to see. He came back and said, "I think you are right." I continued a Bible study in his home with his family and he, like me years before, sucked it up like a sponge. I sit here nearly weeping as I think about it.

If you start with the Kingdom message all other doctrines fall much easier into place. The Kingdom is a common sense message that is easy to understand if you are willing to look with an open mind. The true gospel is the good news of the Kingdom of God. It began and begins with the kingdom .

He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His Kingdom will have no end"

(Luke 1:33)

I want to give you a brief look at some Old and New Testament verses that cannot be ignored:

**THE OLD TESTAMENT
PROPHECIES OF A KING AND
HIS KINGDOM**

More is written in the Old Testament about Christ's second coming as King than is written about His first coming. Listen carefully to these Old Testament Scriptures:

God made a promise to King David: "When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, (When you go to the grave, David) I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, (referring to Jesus) and I will establish His Kingdom. He shall build a house for My name..... and I will

establish the throne of his Kingdom forever” (2 Samuel 7:12-16). How do we know that this is referring to Jesus?

Listen carefully to what the angel Gabriel said to Mary the mother of Jesus. *“Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God and behold you will conceive in your womb, and bear a Son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His Kingdom will have no end”* (Luke 1:30-33, emphasis mine).

Isaiah speaks of a King also who would rule eternally: *“A child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders.... There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over His Kingdom to establish it and uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore”* (Isa. (9:6-7). The Child born to us, never had a kingdom, they hung Him on a cross. When He comes again he will be King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The government will literally rest upon His shoulders.

The Psalmist also writes of a King who would one day rule the nations with a rod of iron: *“But as for Me, I have installed My King upon Zion, My Holy Mountain. I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord; He said to Me, Thou art My Son, today I have be gotten Thee. Ask of Me and I will surely give the nations as Thine inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Thy possession. Thou shall break them with a rod of iron...”* (Psalms 2:6-8)

Daniel writes about a Kingdom that will never end: The statute that Nebuchadnezzar saw in Daniel Chapter two represents various governments of the world beginning with the Babylonian empire and culminates with ten nations represented by the ten toes. *“... a stone was cut out without hands, and struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed **all at the same time**, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth”* (Dan.2:34-35). That is an allegory of Jesus Christ (the stone cut out without hands) putting an end to man’s attempt to govern the earth. Now it gets even more exciting! *“...in the days of those kings the God of*



heaven will set up a Kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that Kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever" (Dan. 2:44).

Micah's prophecy speaks of the one born in Bethlehem being a ruler in Israel: "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be a ruler in Israel" (5:2). ".....**He will be great**" (Isn't that what Gabriel told Mary?) "...to the ends of the earth, and this one will be our peace when the Assyrian invades our land" (Micah 5:2-5a). I believe a conspiracy of nations, mainly Arab nations, will one day soon invade the land of Israel. The one born in Bethlehem will be ruler and He will be their peace.

THE NEW TESTAMENT VALIDATES THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES

Isaiah prophesied that a virgin would bear a Son (Isa. 7:14). Luke, inspired by God, wrote both the gospel of Luke and The Acts of the Apostles. His writings proclaim from beginning to end the message of the Kingdom of God, and that Jesus is the Christ - the anointed King.

Luke began the gospel of Luke announcing the virgin birth of King Jesus: Luke wrote (as I stated earlier) that the angel Gabriel came to Mary and revealed to her that she would fulfill Isaiah's prophecy. "Do not be afraid Mary for you have found favor with God. Behold you will conceive in your womb and bear a Son and you shall name Him Jesus...and that He would reign over the house of Jacob and **His kingdom would have no end**" (Luke 1:30-33). "Mary said to the angel, 'how can this be since **I am still a virgin?**' And the angel answered her, 'the Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the Holy Offspring shall be called the Son of God' " (Luke 1:34-35, emphasis mine). The sinless son of the living God will one day be King of Kings and Lord of Lords.



Jesus began His ministry proclaiming the Gospel (good news) of the Kingdom of God: "But He (Jesus) said to them, 'I must preach the Kingdom of God to the other cities also, **for I was sent for this purpose**' " (Luke 4:43, emphasis mine). He was commissioned by God to teach the message of the 'Kingdom of God'.

The disciples were exposed to His message: "...He began going about from one city and village to another, proclaiming and preaching the Kingdom of God; **and the twelve were with Him**" (Luke 8:1, emphasis mine). He modeled for them what He intended for them to continue to preach. It begins and ends with the Kingdom of God.

He commissioned them to preach the Kingdom Message: "...He sent them out (the disciples) **to proclaim the Kingdom of God and to perform healing**" (Luke 9:2). As Jesus sent them out they were to continue preaching the message they had learned

from Him. In the gospel of Luke he mentions the Kingdom no less than forty-three times. For Luke it begins and ends with the Kingdom of God.

Jesus' last minute instructions: After His crucifixion and resurrection Jesus gathered His disciples together for more instructions. It wasn't really last minute instructions, He taught them for over a month. Luke says, " ... He presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of **forty days** and speaking of the things concerning the Kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3). Their response was, "Is this the time you are restoring the Kingdom to Israel?"

(v. 6). No doubt Jesus said something like this: "Guys, I want you to get it right. You must carry on My instructions about the Kingdom. Wait in the city until I empower you to spread this message. The people must not lose heart. I don't know the day or the hour, but I will return when the Father tells me, and I will be seated on David's throne. I will restore the Kingdom to Israel and bring peace to the nations. I must reign until I have put all God's enemies under My feet, then the Son Himself will be subjected to the Father, so that He may be all in all. Only then can My Father come and be among men. "I SHALL RETURN."



Luke goes on in the book of Acts to show that the disciples got the message and passed it on to others. When persecution hit the city of Jerusalem, *"Phillip went to Samaria and began preaching Christ to them" (2:5). "When they believed Phillip preaching the good news about the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus they were being baptized men and women alike" (v. 12).*

Peter preached Christ this way: *"...that He may send Jesus the Christ (MESSIAH) appointed for you, whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things" (Acts 3:20-21).* That's Kingdom preaching if I ever heard it. It began and begins with the Kingdom .

The Apostle Paul, when the fog lifted (actually scales were lifted from his eyes), *"began to prove that Jesus was the Son of God" (Acts 9:29), and that He is the Christ (Messiah)."* (Acts 17:3). As Luke writes his final chapter in Acts he again speaks of Paul and his message to the people. *"They came to him (Paul) at his lodging in large numbers; and he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning unto evening" (28:23).*

I can't help but think that as Paul opened the scrolls to preach Christ and His Kingdom, that he may have shared many of the verses that we have just looked at from the writings of the prophets. It began and begins with the message of the Kingdom.

It is amazing to me that the Jewish people can read these Old Testament Scriptures and not believe that Jesus is their long awaited Messiah. His return is their blessed hope as well as it is for the Christian. Someday the Jewish people will *"look upon Him whom they crucified and they will mourn" (Zech 13:10).*

It amazes me also that many who believe in Jesus don't understand that His Kingdom will be here on the earth. Dear Pastors and Bible teachers, start where Jesus and the disciples started. We as teachers cannot improve on their method. It began and begins with the Kingdom of God. The Bible began with a paradise created by God, it ends with a paradise restored by Jesus and YOU. That is the Kingdom message.

The Peaceful Religion of Islam Confronts Us



For three years of his presidency, President Obama has travelled the globe promoting the idea that Islam is a religion of peace. Many Americans believed that there would be a new foreign policy because our president was reaching out to the Islamic world?

And like so much of his presidency, President Obama made excuses for the Islamic brethren. For example, he said, "The phrase Jihad has lot of meanings within Islam, and is subject to a lot of different interpretations."

He noted that there are "more than a billion people who practice Islam and an overwhelming majority of them . . . reaffirm peace and justice, and fairness and tolerance. I think all of us recognize that this great religion in the hands of a few extremists has been distorted to justify violence against innocent people that is never justified."

If just ten percent of a billion Muslims are not peaceful, that's 100,000,000 extremists, about one-third the population of the United States.

Three recent headlines caught my attention:

1) Muslim Brotherhood Starts Crucifixions. It was President Obama who supported the efforts of the “Arab Spring.” The Muslim Brotherhood is now in power, and according to reports, “ the radical Muslims have begun crucifying opponents of newly installed President Mohammad Morsi.”

2) Another headline states that leaders of the peaceful religion of Islam in Iran are saying that Israel’s existence is an “insult to all humanity.” The most persecuted people on the globe is an insult. This is envy speaking. The tiny nation of Israel has more Nobel Prize winners than all the Islamic nations combined. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the President of Iran, said confronting Israel is an effort to “protect the dignity of all human beings.” No, getting rid of Israel is a way to make backward Islamic nations look good.

3) A Saudi Arabian Islamic cleric is claiming that Jews drink the blood of children, a centuries-old lie that ignorant Muslims perpetuate and believe:

“Saudi cleric Salman Al-Odeh, a well-known scholar revered by millions globally, went on a lengthy tirade against the Jews during an interview Monday in which he stated that ‘the role of the Jews is to wreak destruction, to wage war, and to practice deception and extortion,’ according to a translation of his remarks by the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI).

“Al-Odeh ranted about the use of human blood in Jewish religious rituals, a notorious anti-Semitic smear commonly referred to as a ‘blood libel.’

“It is well known that the Jews celebrate several holidays, one of which is the Passover, or the matzos holiday,’ he said.”

According to the “blood libel” charge, the blood of children would be mixed with matzos, an unleavened bread eaten by Jews during Passover. The insane Muslim “cleric” Al-Odeh, Jewish people “would lure a child in order to sacrifice him in the religious rite that they perform during that holiday.”

It’s time that President Obama insisted those of Islam come clean about their allegiances. It’s not a minority of Muslims that believe and perpetuate these lies. These beliefs are a cancer than eat at the hearts and minds of Muslims. They want to see the world destroyed so they can rule over its ashes.

THE NEGLECTED NEW TESTAMENT CREED

By Anthony Buzzard



“Within the Christian tradition, the New Testament has for long been read through the prism of the later conciliar creeds...Speaking of Jesus as the Son of God had a *very different* connotation in the first century from that which it has had *ever since* Nicea (325 AD). Talk of his preexistence ought probably in most, perhaps in all cases to be understood on the analogy of the preexistence of the Torah (the Law), to indicate the eternal divine purpose being achieved through him, rather than preexistence of a fully personal kind” (Maurice Wiles, *The Remaking of Christian Doctrine*, SCM Press, emphasis mine).

The current debate in theology is doing much to expose the weakness of the traditional Trinitarian dogma of “three coequal, coeternal persons in One God.” Such exposure can only encourage the widespread interest in a return to the faith of the New Testament. Attempts to recover the teachings of the apostles will, however, be frustrated unless students of the Bible first become fully aware of the danger of reading the Scriptures through spectacles tinged with the traditional understanding of the person of Christ which they have acquired from “orthodoxy.” A realization that the process of “reading back” is ever at work is perhaps the single most important key to learning from the apostles. In this connection the eminent evangelical scholar, F.F. Bruce, makes a significant observation when he says: “People who adhere to ‘sola scriptura’ [‘We go by the Bible only’], as they believe, often adhere in fact to a *traditional* school of interpretation of sola scriptura” (from correspondence with the writer, in the 1980's).

How many evangelicals have honestly subjected their view of the person of Christ to a rigorous examination, without presupposing the doctrine of the Trinity? How much more effective our Bible study would be if we were to take full account of the remarks of about the heritage we have received, probably without question, from the Reformation:

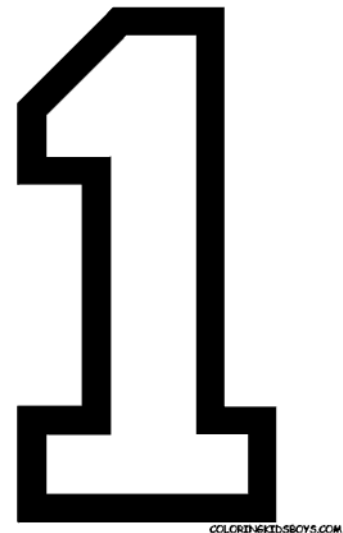
“The Reformers, for all their recasting of the tradition and insistence on the New Testament as the sole authority, *remained fully traditionalist* in Christological doctrine. Leonard Hodgson points out that in the debates of the 17th and 18th centuries the unitarians as well as their opponents accepted the Bible as containing revelation given in the form of propositions, and concludes that ‘on the basis of the argument which both sides held in common, *the unitarians had the better case*’” (*Ibid.*, p. 55, emphasis mine).

Professor Wiles then notes that despite the fact that the unitarians had Scripture on their side, it was not they who won the day: “Christological doctrine has never been derived simply by way of logical inference from the statements of Scripture...The Church has not usually in practice (whatever it may have claimed to be doing in theory) based its Christology exclusively on the witness of the New Testament” (*Ibid.*, p. 54).

The question must therefore arise: Are we being honest with the Bible when we claim it as the sole rule of faith (as the 39 Articles do) while accepting an understanding of the nature of Christ derived from church councils three centuries after the completion of the New Testament? If, as Maurice Wiles says, the Reformers remained fully traditionalist — and as F.F. Bruce claims, evangelicals adhere to traditional schools of interpretation despite claims to be following the Bible only — how sure can we be that our worship does not fall under the uncomfortable New Testament stricture that to worship holding traditions not founded in Scripture is to worship in vain?



What then does speaking of Jesus as Son of God mean in the New Testament? We will avoid misunderstanding if we bear in mind Professor Wiles' warning that ever since the council of Nicea it has meant something "quite different." There is not the slightest hint in the New Testament that "Son of God" means "coequal, coeternal God." The New Testament contains its own simple creedal statements which, if adopted with conviction, relieve the mind of the explicable mysteries, or rather mystifications, of the Trinity. Paul could not have made his position much clearer: "For us [Christians] there is *one God*, the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ... There is *one God*, and one Mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ, himself *man*... One Lord... *One God and Father of all*" (1 Cor. 8:6; 1 Tim. 2:5; Eph. 4:6).



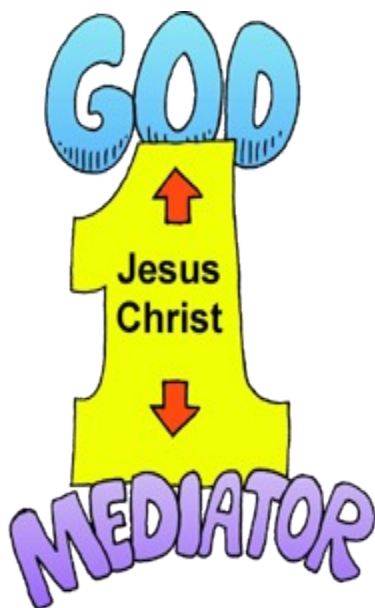
John's creed is evidently in harmony with Paul's: "This is what eternal life means: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you sent" (John 17:3).

It can hardly be disputed that these statements draw a careful and deliberate distinction between the one God and Jesus Christ. They are simply irreconcilable with the notion that Jesus is to be included in the Godhead as coequal with the Father.

1300 times in the NT, the word "God" means the Father!

"It is quite obvious," says the Roman Catholic writer Raymond E. Brown, "that in the New Testament the term 'God' is applied with overwhelming frequency to God the Father, that is, to the God revealed in the Old Testament to whom Jesus prayed. The attitude toward Jesus in the early sermons of Acts is that Jesus was a man attested by God (2:22), and that God preached to Israel through Jesus (10:36). Throughout most of the New Testament there tends to be a distinction between God (=the Father) and Jesus" (*Jesus, God and Man*, p. 6).

The writer then illustrates this by citing a number of passages which draw a very clear distinction between God, who is numerically one, and Jesus Christ, who has God the Father as his God. For example: "The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory." "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God..." (Eph. 1:17; 2 Cor. 13:14).



1Timothy 2:5

It is not only, however, in the book of Acts, where the foundations of the Christian church were being laid by the apostles, that Jesus is carefully distinguished from the one God. At the end of his life, Paul in 1 Timothy 2:5 insists, in view of the impending apostasy, that "there is *one God*, and one Mediator...the *man* Jesus Christ." From the earliest pronouncements of Peter in Acts to the last statement of Paul in his letter to Timothy, Jesus Christ is designated as "man" and distinguished from the one God, the Father. The same distinction between God and Jesus is invariably maintained by all the apostles when at the opening of their letters they convey blessing from the two divine persons: "Grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." This enumeration of the divine persons is repeated some eighteen times and surely must be taken to represent the original Christian view of the Godhead. It is beyond question, therefore, that the New Testament creedal statements are strictly "unitarian." This is hardly surprising when Jesus himself cites with approval the great foundational text of Old Testament monotheism: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord" (Mark 12:29). Will anyone question Paul's loyalty to Old Testament monotheism in view of his conviction that "There is no other God but one" (1 Cor. 8:4)? One might well ask what possible assertion could state more clearly that the apostles believed in "the only wise God," the "One God and Father of all" (1 Tim. 1:17; Eph. 4:6).

When Jesus is accused of making himself God, he is quick to point out that the term “god,” in a sense quite different from its application to the One and Only God of Israel, could properly be applied to human leaders invested with divine authority. He argues that the judges were termed “gods”; he could have added that Moses was designated a “god” to Pharaoh (Ex. 7:1). Thus to claim to be “Son of God” was not to claim to be “God” as Trinitarianism seems to imply (see John 10:34-36).

The New Testament data is quite clear. When basic statements about the Godhead are made, Jesus is always distinguished from the One God, and is frequently designated “man.” It is this prevailing New Testament information which Trinitarianism ignores entirely, while it makes an appeal to a handful of passages, (several are disputed as to their exact sense) in which the term “god” is, or may be, applied to Jesus. Trinitarianism makes no allowance for the fact that Jesus is described as “man,” even in his future function as eschatological ruler and judge (Acts 17:31); when he arrives to establish the kingdom he is likewise designated as “the second *man* from heaven” (1 Cor. 15:47). Most significantly of all, Jesus is still *man*, in clear distinction from God, the Father, even in his present exalted office as Mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5). It is here of all places in Scripture that Paul could have given a hint of his belief in the Trinity. This he stubbornly refuses to do. His statement in 1 Timothy 2:5 is entirely consistent with



his matured thinking in Philippians 2:9, where he describes precisely the exalted “name” which has now been given to Jesus by God, his Father. Paul upholds the distinction which is characteristic of his doctrine of God: The name which has now been conferred on Jesus and which every tongue is to confess is “Lord,” and this title he elsewhere carefully distinguishes from the name of the One God (1 Cor. 8:6). Why then is the confession of Jesus as “God” taken to be the hallmark of Christian orthodoxy?



Milton



Newton



Locke

The simple unity of God was clearly perceived by the poet John Milton, who, along with Sir Isaac Newton and John Locke, perhaps the greatest minds of the 17th century, was unable to find Trinitarianism in the Bible: “In Ephesians 4:4-6, ‘There is one body and one spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.’ Here there is one Spirit, and one Lord; but the Father is one, and therefore *God is one in the same sense as the remaining objects of which unity is predicated, that is, numerically one, and therefore one also in person.* First Timothy 2:5, ‘There is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.’ Here the mediator, though not purely human, is purposely named man... lest he should be thought equal to the Father, or the same God, the argument distinctly and expressly referring to one God. Again 1 Corinthians 8:4-6, to those ‘Who are called gods, whether in heaven or earth, God the Father, of whom are all things’ is opposed singly; he who is numerically one God to ‘many gods’” (*Milton on the Son of God and Holy Spirit*, pp. 17, 19).

It is an obvious fact that the term “God” (i.e., “*O Theos*,” with the definite article in the Greek text) is reserved in the New Testament for the Father alone. We may say, therefore, that God in the absolute and unrestricted sense applies to the Father only. Any creedal formula which fails to take account of these facts is liable to distort the New Testament data. Trinitarianism sweeps away the hundreds of passages in the New Testament in which Jesus is distinguished from God and relies on a very small number of texts, some of which are disputed for textual



or syntactical reasons, in which the term “god” is associated with Jesus. It makes very little sense that these verses only should be taken to represent the apostolic mind, while the large majority of passages in which Christ is distinguished from God are ignored -- just kept out of sight!

It is well known that the Hebrew mind can speak of an agent of God as bearing the name of God. The angel who conveys the message of the God of Israel can legitimately be named “god” (Gen. 21:17, 18; 22:11, 12, 15, 16; Judges 13:21). The judges of Israel can be termed “gods” (Ex. 22:28). Even the house of David can fulfill the function of “god” (Zech. 12:8). No one suggests that the status of these agents was coequality with God. Thus also in the New Testament the one who is preeminently the Son of God, who represents God more perfectly than any previous agent of God, who “stands for” God in the sense that Old Testament prophecies describing the activity of God will be carried out by him, can rightly be addressed as “god” (John 20:28; Heb. 1:8). Indeed the Father himself addresses the Son as “god” in his function of ruler of the coming age (Heb. 1:8; 2:5). This is in line with Isaiah 9:6, where the future King is addressed as “god” (note the LXX, ‘Mighty God [not “Almighty”], Father of the Coming Age’). Indeed the Psalm (45) refers to the coming King. That the King was addressed as “god”

would not, however, have caused a Hebrew to abandon his strictly unitarian understanding of the Godhead. Nor should it mean the adoption of a Trinitarian formula which, as well as being impossibly complex, interferes with the unity of the two Testaments. The single passage in which God addresses his Son as “god” should not be taken as a springboard for the proposition that Jesus is “very God of very God.” Should not the fundamental doctrine of the Godhead be based on a balanced view of the New Testament evidence rather than on a fraction of the data? Ought not the clear creedal declarations of the NT be taken as the primary, decisive and definitive evidence?

Maurice Wiles maintains, along with a large number of scholars, that all the New Testament writers “(even the 4th Gospel which comes nearest) stop short of the assertions that have come to characterize the later doctrine of the Incarnation” (*Myth of God Incarnate*, p. 4). “If we avoid reading the New Testament with spectacles colored by later dogma, we find emerging a Christological picture or pictures *quite different* from later orthodoxy” (Frances Young in *Myth of God Incarnate*, p. 14).

The discovery of that New Testament doctrine of Christ, which has been so effectively buried by the later traditions, is well within the power of any seeker for Truth, and it will lead to the abandonment of the unnecessary Trinitarian mystification in favor of the simple creed of 1 Corinthians 8:4-6 and I Tim. 2:5. Above all Jesus will be reinstated as the one whose view of God ought to be reflected in the Church's creed. Jesus was a unitary, non-Trinitarian monotheist, as Mark 12:29 demonstrates beyond any possible argument.



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