

1) Courage for Truth, and 2) Christian Destiny

Anthony Buzzard, Theological Conference, 2nd May, 2015

Jesus is the only answer to Jihad and Isa (the Arabic for Jesus) the only answer to Isis. The Bible is the only answer to the Quran. Dan. 7:27, 1 Pet. 1:7, hidden truths.

Writing about the monumental problem produced by Trinitarianism and the Church Councils, Dr. Martin Werner of Bern University wrote:

“The catholic theologians could certainly prove by means of Scripture the distinction of the Son’s personality from that of God the Father. But the catholic theologians landed themselves in a dilemma as soon as they sought to prove, against the Modalists, [Oneness — “the Father IS the Son” people] a correspondingly clear cut biblical doctrine concerning the agreement of the dogma of the **Deity of the Father and Son** with **MONOTHEISM**. For according to the NT witnesses, in the teaching of Jesus and the Apostles relative to the **MONOTHEISM** of the Old Testament and Judaism, **there had been no element of change whatsoever. Mark 12:29 recorded the confirmation by JESUS himself, without any reservation, of the supreme monotheistic confession of faith of Israelite religion in its complete form...**The attempts of the “orthodox” to demonstrate the agreement of their dogma of TWO divine persons with monotheism remained seriously *uncertain and contradictory*...they fell into the doctrine of **two GODS**, i.e. if the Son’s own personality was at the same time emphasized over against the Father...The most potent cause of all the difficulties, dilemma and sophistry of this situation was the **deficiency of the Scriptural evidence**. None of the contending parties could obtain from Scripture a clear and decisive argument for the solution of the problem of the reconciliation between an unlimited **monotheism** and the distinction of the Son’s personality from the Father.”¹

I maintain therefore that Christianity is the only world religion which begins by discarding its own founder’s creed (see the bumper sticker). Write to the newspapers, or blog about this everywhere.

The *International Critical Commentary* on 1 Peter confesses: “It would be rash to conclude that Peter *identified Yahweh with Christ*. No such identification can be clearly made out in the NT (citing Hort). We are not to suppose that the apostles identified Christ with Yahweh; there were passages which made this impossible: Ps. 110:1; Mal. 3:1 and Gen. 19:24.”²

I will never forget the chorus of horrified gasps from the audience of 400 at the Cult Awareness meeting held in Atlanta when Atlanta Bible College had moved from Oregon, IL to Morrow, GA in the early 1990’s. Christian radio had announced that **a new cult** in town was going to be exposed, and its lethal heresies. I wondered if this might possibly be us, but I wasn’t sure we were *that* important! But it was us. We were the new cult to be avoided on pain of losing salvation. The gasps of the 400 were the reaction to the statement of the presenter that “David (Krogh) and Anthony are not cult figures like Jim Jones; they are not going to poison their flock literally. But they *are* cult figures in the theological and philosophical sense: and Anthony does not even believe in the preexistence of Jesus.” The ladies in the audience, being kinder and more sympathetic to our plight, rushed up to me at the end and begged me to bow my head and believe in the Trinity, and be saved. The next day I was there handing out my booklet on *Who Is Jesus?* but was immediately warned that I was not permitted to do this on the turf of Trinitarians.

¹ Martin Werner, DD, *The Formation of Dogma*, p. 241, 242, 1959.

² Dr. Biggs, Regius Prof. of Ecclesiastical History at Oxford, *International Critical Commentary on I Peter*, p. 99, 127.

One would have to be very slow not to see that the spirit of Trinitarianism is utterly hostile to us (have we forgotten about the murder of Servetus and many others? — I hope not). Evil is intentional and aggressive, and unless we oppose this with equal intentionality and aggressiveness, we lose out. We run the awful risk of being ashamed of the words of Jesus. The late Eric Chang, after he had as a “professional” vigorously taught the Trinity for decades, was one who was transparently honest in his frank admission that **Trinitarianism is polytheism** and that the church had altered the meaning of the word “GOD.” (We remember how words like “marriage” have undergone a change of meaning, too.)

We gain help from some leading Trinitarian scholars, for example this admission from a Trinitarian, Dr. Brown: “It is a simple fact and an undeniable historical fact that several major doctrines that now seem central to the Christian faith — such as the doctrine of the Trinity and the doctrine of the nature of Christ — were not present in a full and self-defined generally accepted form until the fourth and fifth centuries. If they are essential today — as all of the orthodox creeds and confessions assert — it must be because they are true. If they are true, then they must always have been true; they cannot have become true in the fourth and fifth century. But if they are both true and essential, how can it be that the early Church took centuries to formulate them?”³ Condemned from one’s own mouth!

Eric Chang from his excellent introduction to *The Only True God*, a must-read for all who espouse the One God of Jesus:

“Trinitarianism speaks of three persons who are all equally God, and then goes on to claim a place in monotheism by **changing the definition of God** into a divine nature, substance or Godhead in which the three persons all share, which means of course that this Godhead is *not at all identical* to the one and only personal God of the Bible [Is it “sheep stealing” to invite a Baptist to a unitarian congregation? Or does a Baptist worship a different God?] Where there is belief in more than one person who is God, that is polytheism by definition. What we need to realize is that Trinitarianism is in essence therefore a **different faith from biblical monotheism**. So we are not dealing here with a relatively simple matter of biblical interpretation, but with a far more profound matter of biblical faith. In other words what is at stake is true or false faith, not just true or false interpretation of the Bible. True or false faith, according to the Scriptures is a matter of life or death...[The situation is that] it is not the Scripture which governs the belief or dogma but the dogma which governs the interpretation. This is usually done quite unconsciously (as I know from experience) because of the belief that Scripture *has* to be understood in this way, that is, we believed that this was the only right way to understand it. It was of course never any one’s intention to deceive ourselves or others. It was our faith which determined the way we understood things. Hence as we’ve seen it is at root a matter of faith.”

Paul wrote: “Evil men will grow worse and worse, deceiving and **being deceived**. God will give them over to a spirit of deception, because they did not receive a passion for truth **in order to be saved**” (2 Thess. 2:10). Failure to “believe the truth” is equivalent to “taking pleasure in wickedness” (2 Thess. 2:12). “Their eyes *they* have closed, **otherwise** they could repent and be saved” (Jesus in the parable of the sower, Matt. 13:25, quoting Isaiah; see Mark 4:11-12; Luke 8:12).

Eric Chang again: “During the nearly 4 decades of serving as pastor, church leader and teacher of many who would enter the full-time ministry, I taught Trinitarian doctrine with great zeal, as many who know me can testify [zeal without knowledge does not save, Rom. 10:2]. Trinitarianism was what I drank in with my spiritual milk when I was a spiritual infant. Later in my biblical and

³ *Heresies*, Doubleday, 1984, p. 20.

theological studies my interest focused on Christology which I pursued with considerable intensity. My life centered on Jesus Messiah. I studied and sought to practice his teaching with the utmost devotion. I did indeed worship one God and that one God was Jesus, the one God revealed in the Old Testament, namely Yahweh. Yahweh was in practice replaced by the God Jesus Christ or God the Son. About three years ago [in 2006] I was pondering this question: how can the gospel be made known by us? I discovered that my Christianity was accompanied by some kind of prejudice against the Muslims which had to be overcome, if I was to understand them and reach out to them. Also I realized that the moment I said anything about the Trinity, or said that Jesus is God, all communication with them would cease abruptly. The same of course is true of the Jews. So how can they be reached...Jesus cannot return because the gospel cannot be preached to these nations as long as it is Trinitarian. One thing that I could see was that I needed to reevaluate **whether or not we Christians are really monotheists**...When I examined my own thoughts I too realized that my Trinitarianism was **at root incompatible with biblical monotheism**...When I first faced the challenge of reevaluating my Trinitarianism in the light of the Bible and then sharing that light with all who wish to see it, I thought I was alone in taking this stand. But when preparing this manuscript for publication I was surprised to come across the work of the renowned theologian Hans Kung and to discover that he had already declared that the doctrine of the Trinity is unbiblical in his large work with the title, *Christianity: Essence History and Future*, 1994.

“Trinitarianism also insists on making the spirit of the Lord a distinct [third] person from Yahweh. For anyone somewhat familiar with the Old Testament this is something strange. Jews must wonder whether Christians really have any understanding of Bible at all [!]. To argue the spirit of Yahweh, God’s spirit, is a Person distinct from Him is like saying that the spirit of man, man’s spirit, is a distinct individual who lives in you or with you as the first. This might be perceived by someone who suffers from schizophrenia, but to suggest that this is the case with God is lunacy, if not something worse like blasphemy” (p. 21).

Chang was becoming part of a noble history. To Michael Servetus, and the Dutch Anabaptists led by Adam Pastor, as well as to the whole community of Polish Anabaptists, the Trinity was a deviation from biblical **monotheism**, a mistaken attempt to translate apostolic belief in one God, the Father,⁴ into the language of Greek metaphysics. Worse still, the creeds and the Councils of Nicea and Chalcedon were used in coercive and destructive ways to force belief in these dogmas. This was all the more regrettable since the terminology of the discussion on Christology was itself a jumble of ambiguous terms — in sharp contrast to the Bible’s plainly unitarian creed.

The freedom to explore apart from the “tyranny of dogma” (represented, for example, by the Athanasian Creed which threatens death to deviants from orthodox Trinitarianism) led to the rediscovery of a frequently forgotten element in the Church’s presentation of Jesus — his being a human being. It was widely admitted that traditional understandings of Jesus had often suffered from a latent “docetism” (belief that Jesus only *seemed* to be human), which for John, the Apostle, signaled very “antichrist” (1 John 4:2; 2 John 7). Moreover, traditional formulations about Christ seemed to demonstrate a fondness for a particular interpretation of John 1:1, to the exclusion of the very human portraits presented by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Acts. In fact, the gospel of John had been allowed a more than proportionate influence in the formation of Christology. Could this have been because the style of John’s writing, while actually very Hebraic, appealed to the speculative Greek mind, and could be easily misunderstood and distorted by Gentiles?

A local Bible collector who is fascinated by the translation of John 1:1 (cp. the frequent emails to me: “Yes, Anthony, but have you ever read John 1:1?”) has provided me with 300 translations

⁴ 1 Cor. 8:6; 1 Tim. 2:5; John 17:3; Eph. 4:6.

(spanning centuries) of John 1:1, which correct the mistaken impression that John intended two Persons in John 1:1, a, b, c.

Now this honest dissenter from the Church of England, David Watson. This clergyman resigned his orders in the Church of England: "A sympathetic study of traditional Jewish religion can reveal the extent to which the modern English Christian gives **a meaning to the words of the New Testament different from that which was in the minds of the Jewish writers**. Greek was the language they used to convey the universal Christian message, but their mode of thinking was to a large extent Hebraic. For a full understanding it is necessary for the modern Christian not only to study the Greek text, but to sense the Hebraic idea which the Jewish writers sought to convey in Greek words.

"I cannot claim to have become very skilled in this, but made enough progress to discover how greatly I had misinterpreted the Bible in the past. Like all ordained Christian ministers I had spoken dogmatically, authoritatively from a pulpit which no one may occupy without license from a Bishop. And much of what I had said had been misleading because my own mind was incapable of giving a correct interpretation of the book I was authorized to expound. For me, the realization of this fact made nonsense of the distinction between clergy and laity, and was the main cause of my relinquishment of my orders.

"In describing my own intellectual deficiencies, and the process by which I discovered my inability to grasp the meaning of the Bible across the vast linguistic gulf separating me from its Jewish writers, I can surely claim to write with first-hand knowledge. From what I know of the clergy in general I see no reason for supposing that I was peculiar in suffering from this particular deficiency. In fact, the authority of the Protestant ministry as a whole, the claim to be able to understand the Bible and expound it as the word of God, **is in my view a vast confidence trick**. I am not accusing the clergy of being individually fraudulent, or even insincere. The confidence trick is collective; individually those who engage in it **are themselves deceived by it**, just as when I began to expound the Bible from pulpits I was fully confident that I was able to give a correct interpretation.

"Some may believe that the rite of ordination itself bestows divine grace sufficient to overcome any liability to mislead a congregation through an incorrect interpretation. If this view is held, however, it must be reconciled with the indisputable fact that the Christian ministry as a whole has produced a large number of different, and often irreconcilable versions of the Christian faith, all supposed to have been derived from the same biblical record...Any claim that training and ordination produce the only authentic Christian teaching is fraudulent. [For excellent information on church history and dogma, see Sean Finnegan's Intro. to Church History, at Dan Gill's site, 21stcr.org.]

"The thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England state specifically in no uncertain terms that true Christian doctrine is derived not from the Church's councils and traditions, but from the Bible alone. Anglo-catholics believe the very opposite; consequently when one of them after induction to a benefice reads the Articles publicly, and declares his assent to them, he virtually commits perjury. It is, however, **legalized perjury**."⁵

We propose that the tendency to obscure the human being Christ (the only Christ there is) arose in opposition to the central and essentially simple New Testament affirmation of Jesus *as Messiah* (Matt. 16:16-18), the second Adam, supernaturally conceived, yet coming into existence in the womb of his mother. This view of Jesus' origin we may with Raymond Brown usefully call

⁵ *Christian Myth and Spiritual Reality*, 1967, p. 29.

“conception Christology.”⁶ Brown insists that Matthew and Luke know nothing of a literal preexistence of the Messiah.⁷ They could not therefore have been Trinitarians in the traditional sense. (They could not therefore join a Trinitarian church.) Jesus’ conception for them is his coming into being. The germ of later Trinitarian theology should be sought elsewhere than in these Gospel accounts. Should it be ascribed to John and Paul? Or to a distortion of their writings caused by the speculative tendency of Greek philosophy? This influence was apparently already at work when John, writing at the end of the first century, pointedly emphasizes, against an incipient Gnostic docetism, the human Jesus (1 John 4:2; 2 John 7). He came *en sarki*, “as a human person,” not “into a human body” which is a very different matter. John seems in his first epistle to be correcting an emerging misunderstanding of his “logos” doctrine in the Gospel (John 1:1-3). It was the *impersonal* “eternal life” which was “with the Father” (1 John 1:2) before the birth of Jesus, *not* the Son himself preexisting. In other words, John intended us to understand that when the word became flesh (John 1:14), the transition was *not that of a divine person becoming a human person, but of an impersonal personification* (cp. *Wisdom in Proverbs* 8:22, 30) — the “word” of God — becoming embodied as a human being. In John 1:5 the light (*phos*) is neuter but in John 1:10 the light has become a person (masculine *auton*).

The subsequent development of Trinitarian thinking was encouraged by a misunderstanding of the Hebrew notion of “word” by Justin Martyr. For John, “logos” signified not a second person in the Godhead, but the self-expressive activity of God. Justin, who as a Platonist had been accustomed to thinking of the “logos” as an intermediary between God and man, not unnaturally reads Jesus back into the “logos” and thinks of him as the *preexisting Son*, a person numerically different from and subordinate to the One God. Justin then proceeds to find Jesus in the Old Testament, even identifying him with the angel of the Lord, before his incarnation. Yet even in Justin we are a long way from the final creedal formulation of the Council of Chalcedon. The important point to be noted is that developed Trinitarianism cannot be traced back to the New Testament, through the earliest Church fathers. These fathers always thought of Christ as subordinate to the One God. Some believed the Son had a beginning.

The point at which Greek philosophy was able to interfere with biblical teaching was the Gospel of John and particularly his prologue. A misunderstanding of John’s gospel led to the projection of Jesus back onto the preexisting “logos.” Thus the simple Messianic Christology of the Synoptics and also of John (provided he is not read from a speculative Greek perspective) was obscured. It has been the task of the Cambridge *Myth of God Incarnate* theologians to raise the question as to whether “talk of Jesus’ preexistence ought probably in most, perhaps in all cases, to be understood on the analogy of the preexistence of the Torah, to indicate the eternal divine purpose being achieved through him [cp. 1 Pet. 1:20], rather than preexistence of a fully personal kind.”⁸

John Biddle, Father of English Anti-Trinitarians: More Courage from the Past

John Biddle (1615-1662), educated in classics and philosophy at Oxford, embarked on an “impartial search of the Scriptures” after he began to question received church doctrine. From 1641 (age 26) to 1645 Biddle was headmaster of Crypt School, Gloucester. It was during this period that his close study of the New Testament caused him to become disaffected with the doctrine of the Trinity. The matter was of such a serious nature that the magistrates issued an order for his arrest

⁶ *The Birth of the Messiah*, 150, fn. 52.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 31, fn. 17.

⁸ Maurice Wiles, *The Remaking of Christian Doctrine* (London: SCM Press, 1974), 53. Cp. Wiles’ observation in *The Myth of God Incarnate*, 3: “Incarnation, in its full and proper sense, is not something directly presented in Scripture.”

and imprisonment. Following a debate with Archbishop Ussher (of chronology fame), Biddle summed up the result of his study of early Christianity: “The Fathers of the first two centuries, or thereabouts, when the judgments of Christians were yet free, and not enslaved with the determinations of Councils, asserted the Father only to be the one God.”

Biddle complained that the Greek philosophical language of the creeds was “first hatched by the **subtlety of Satan** in the heads of Platonists, to **pervert** the worship of the true God.” Parliament lost no time in ordering that Biddle’s work be burned. In 1648 the British government passed what has been called the “Draconian Ordinance” for the punishment by death of “Blasphemies and Heresies,” aimed at Biddle’s claim that Trinitarian doctrine introduces “three Gods, and so subverts the Unity of God, so frequently inculcated in Scripture.” The Athanasian Creed is no answer to the problem: “for who is there (if at least he dare make use of reason in his religion) who seeth not that this is as ridiculous as if one should say, Peter is an Apostle, James an Apostle, John an Apostle; yet there are not three Apostles but one Apostle?”

In 1655 Biddle was committed to Newgate Prison for “publicly denying that Jesus Christ was the Almighty or the Most High God.” Supporters of Biddle were quick to point out that all Christians must be considered guilty of death by Parliament’s latest attempt to suppress anti-Trinitarianism, for “he that saith that Christ died, saith that Christ was not God, for God could not die. But every Christian saith that Christ died, therefore every Christian saith that Christ was not God.”

A petition for the release of Biddle described him as “a man, though differing from most of us in many great matters of faith, yet by reason of his diligent study of the Holy Scripture, sober and peaceable conversation, which some of us have intimate and good knowledge of, we cannot but judge every way capable of the liberty promised in the Government.”

Though only forty-seven years old, Biddle had **spent nearly ten years of his life in prison for his insistence that God was a single person**. He died in prison in 1662, “a victim of *odium theologicum* and the filthy conditions of the place in which he was lodged.” A sympathetic biographer wrote of Biddle’s “great zeal for promoting holiness of life and manners; for this was always his end and design in what he taught. He valued not his doctrines for speculation but for practice.”⁹

I want to remind you that the Council of Nicea pronounced a formal anathema of excommunication and damnation on all, and thus all of you, who would not affirm the Trinity. That same cruel doctrine remains on the official books of evangelical and other churches. It is good to be aware of this if we attend in that environment. Does the “pastor” know about this? Does he care? Do we care about 8 million JW’s who believe that Jesus was an angel and still is (though their founder, Russell, did not believe this!). There is a large potential ministry to ex-JWs. They need not become agnostic, atheist or Trinitarian.

The scene I am depicting is very tough, I admit. My attempt is to be honest with the words of Scripture and avoid fatal compromise, which is all too easy to fall into (see Mark 8:38 for a warning).

But then Jesus seems to have set the bar not impossibly high, but very high. In Matthew 7:25 he warned of false prophets, that is false religious teachers, and went on to say in that connection that “multitudes will say on that future day [when we encounter Jesus face to face], ‘Lord, lord, did we not teach and preach in your name, cast out demons in your name and do many great miracles in your name’” — only to be rejected as not having been Christian. The problem would seem to be the destructive **lack of knowledge** mentioned by both Isaiah 5:13 and Hosea 4:6. After all Isaiah 53:11

⁹ Information for this section is taken from H.J. McLachlan’s *Socinianism in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford University Press, 1951), 163-217.

has been almost entirely ignored or twisted! “By his knowledge my servant [the Messiah] will make many right, make them righteous.” Dan. 12:3: “Those who have insight will shine brightly like the expanse of the heaven, and those who make many wise by **their knowledge** will shine like the stars forever and ever.” We must be sensitive also to Isaiah 5:20: “Woe to those who call evil good and good evil.” The same point is made clearly in Proverbs 24:24 and 17:15; Mal. 2:17; Jer. 24:14. Jeremiah stood alone and warned that “in **the last days** you will clearly understand it...I am against the prophets who have prophesied false dreams...They speak a vision of their own imagination, not from the mouth of the Lord, and lead my people astray by their falsehoods and reckless boasting, yet I did not send them or command them, nor do they furnish the people the slightest benefit... You have perverted the words of the living God” (see Jer. 23).

Peace of Mind from John 17:3

What we believe should give us rest and peace: I found this in a book on holistic health: “Now there is a specific feeling which has for millennia tantalized us with the promise of doing away with anxiety once and for all, and that is the feeling of certainty. Certainties are warm, dry shelters in the storm. Even certainties of the worst commonly relieve us of the shapeless dreads of anxiety; there is a peace in not having to wonder and struggle after answers any more that seems to be able to surpass the fear of doom itself. Anxiety can cloud my thoughts and suspend me in a helpless paralysis, while a certainty lends me a basis for decision and action.”¹⁰

John 17:3 is exactly that, compared with the nightmare of confusion and complexity and often vagueness, which is Trinitarianism. Find your peace in the beautiful statement in John 17:3: “You, Father, are the only one who is true God.” See the introduction to my translation¹¹ for some more interesting and revealing quotations, which can empower us. And give us certainty. Truth is life-imparting, energy-imparting (1 Thess. 2:13, *energetai*), and believing what is false is like putting cyanide in your coffee. And everything depends on understanding and believing the seed of Gospel of the Kingdom (Matt. 13, Mark 3, Luke 8; 1 Pet. 1:22ff), the germ of immortality, and thus the elixir of life and the fountain of youth.

PART 2

Now to my other topic, a dimension and component of the Abrahamic Kingdom Gospel message to which we have not paid, I think, anything like the attention which the Bible gives it. It is the issue of Christian hope and reward. I mention just a handful of texts on this large subject. In both cases truth has been hiding behind obfuscating translation, or failure to preach and teach the fullness of Scripture (many churchgoers are exposed to a tiny fraction of the Bible). Jesus is utterly straightforward and real in his answer to Peter about what the apostles would get out of following Jesus as Messiah. “What is in it for us?” (Matt. 19:27). First recall Jesus: The new era is so great that the lowest member of it (*the one who is least in the kingdom of God*) is greater than the greatest one of the previous era (NET on Matt 11:11). To be in the kingdom is to be greater than the greatest human person of the present age! “David became greater and greater because God was with him” (2 Sam. 5:10). Jesus was to be great (Luke 1:32-33) and of his Davidic Kingdom there will no end. Greatness is something to be desired, **on God’s terms of course.**

Jesus could have given a falsely spiritual, phony answer to the Apostles’ question in Matthew 19:27. He could have talked about just serving God out of love, with no expectation, and leaving it at that. But he does not! Rather he calls upon a massive theme of the whole Bible: “In the new age

¹⁰ Deane Juhan, *Job’s Body*, 1998, p. 7.

¹¹ *The One God, the Father, One Man Messiah Translation*, with commentary, at Amazon.

when the world is reborn, you who have followed me will be promoted to sit on 12 thrones, to administer the 12 tribes of Israel.” This was echoed by Paul with indignation that his church did not understand a very simple and basic truth: “Don’t you understand that the saints are going to manage the world?” (Moffat). This is exactly in keeping with Rev. 1:5-6; **2:26-27**; 3:21 and 20:1-6 that world dominion is going to be in the hands of Jesus and also in the hands of the saints. Do you want to be *like Jesus*? Then listen to this: “To him who overcomes and keeps my works to the end, I will give him power over the nations to rule them with a rod of iron and shatter them like clay vessels, **just as** my Father gave me that same authority.” All this is based on the massively important 2nd Psalm, really the head and chief psalm, where **power over the nations** to discipline them strongly will be given to the Messiah whose Kingdom authority will stretch to the ends of the earth (cp. Mic. 5:4-6). Psalm 2 provides a brilliant scene from the future, when Jesus is installed in Jerusalem and people will be strongly advised to submit to him, and the saints. There are surviving people here (“few people left,” Isa. 24:6, forged, eliminated by Ellen White¹²), still with a chance to repent and populate the new world of the Kingdom as mortals. Psalm 2:9 about the rulership over the nations is alluded to no less than 3 times in Revelation (2:26-27; 12:5 and 19:15). It is a key verse for Jesus and thus for us.

This sounds like a typical day in the coming Kingdom:

“But the just Lord is in the midst of Jerusalem, and he will never do an unjust thing: morning by morning he will bring out his judgment to the light, and it is not hidden, and he knows not injustice by extortion, nor injustice in strife” (Zeph. 3:5 LXA)

Now to 1 Peter 1:7 and Daniel 7:27, Deuteronomy 26:19 which have been hiding.

1 Peter 1:7, New Living Translation: “These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold — though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.”

Translators’ Translation: “Gold perishes even though it has been through the refiner’s fire. When your faith has been proved it is of much greater value than that, for it will bring you praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.”

Contemporary English Version: “This is necessary so that your faith may be found genuine. (Your faith is more valuable than gold, which will be destroyed even though it is itself tested by fire.) Your genuine faith will result in **praise, glory, and honor for you** when Jesus Christ is revealed.”

Where did Peter get this?

Deut. 26:18-19, English Standard Version: “And the LORD has declared today that you [Israel] are a people for his treasured possession, as he has promised you, and that you are to keep all his commandments, and that he will set you in **praise and in fame and in honor high above all nations that He has made**, and that you shall be a people holy to the LORD your God, as He promised.”

All this is based on the “supremacy of Israel” verses which are all over the Hebrew Bible, notably in Deuteronomy 26 and Isaiah 40-66, especially 60:12: “the nation which will not serve you [Israel] will perish.” 1 Peter calls on these **Israel** texts and **applies them to the church**. Exodus 19:6: Israel are priests and kings. It is the Church who are to be priests and kings (1 Pet. 2:9, 10; Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:1-6) and God’s “special treasure” (also Titus 2:14, cp. Deut. 4:20-26; 7:6-11; 14:2; 26:18; Isa. 62:12; Isa. 41:11-13; 42:6, 7; 43:6, 7; 45:14; 46:13; 49:6, cp. Acts 13:47; Isa.

¹²See her *Great Controversy*, p. 739. Her millennium has no human beings on earth, but only the Devil on earth! It would be hard to imagine a greater interference with the Gospel of the Kingdom, but 23 million believe it on the basis of their “prophets.” The throne of David and of Jesus was removed!

49:22, 23, 25, 26; 54:3, 13-17; **55:2-5**; **12**; 58:12;60:10-22; 61:6, 7, **9**; 62:2-5, 12; 65:9, 10; 65:17ff., in this case mortals who die young at 100; 66:18, 24; Jer. 23:1-8; Isa. 1:26; 4:3; 11:14; 12:6; 13:20; 14:2; 16:5; 19:21-25; 24:23; 25:8; 26:2, 9, 14, 15, 19; 27:6; 28:5-6; 29:5, 17; 30:19, 25; 32:1).

All this gives you the energizing vision of the future and the “testimony of Jesus [his inspired, prophetic word] is the spirit of prophecy” (Rev. 19:10). To take away the words of Jesus in Revelation is to lose out on life (Rev. 22:18-20). Luther wrote that the book of Revelation is not a Christian book and no one knows what it means.

1 Peter 1:7 is remarkable, and hiding in many translations (truth often hides in translation, or a corrupted manuscript as in KJV of 1 John 5:7; 1 Tim 6:3; 1 John 5:18). It is thought scandalous that the believers, the international church, would receive **praise and honor and fame!** Commentary is often smarter. *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, E. H. Plumptre, Dean of Wells: “The context and the parallelisms (Rom. 2:7, ‘to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for **glory and honor and immortality**, gain the life of the age to come’) make it certain that the praise and glory and honor in I Pet. 1:7 refer to the praise and glory which men and women will receive, when sufferings rightly borne have done their work (cp. I Cor. 4:5, ‘then each man’s praise will come to him from God’).” Note that this will happen at the future revelation (*apokalypsis*) of Jesus (1 Pet. 1:7, 13). Thus “going to heaven when we die,” promoted tirelessly by that massive organization we call “Church,” turns out to be false and deceiving. The false idea is based on the erroneous teaching about the immortal soul, which must live on in heaven or an eternal torturing hellfire. Those caught in these deceptions are unable to say “there is a lie in my right hand” (Isa. 44:20). They then “defraud the one in the right with meaningless arguments” (Isa. 29:21).

The glory and honor and fame, or renown, honor and beauty, which is the destiny of the faithful, is simply a repeat of Deuteronomy 26:18: “God will set you high above the nations which He has made, for praise, fame and honor, and that you shall be a consecrated people.”

Daniel 7 is the indispensable starting point for defining the heart of the Gospel of the Kingdom. In verse 18 “the saints receive the Kingdom and possess the Kingdom forever, for all ages to come.” Verse 22: “judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Most Holy One, and the time came [not a timeless eternity!] when the saints possessed the Kingdom” (cp. “Blessed are the meek; they will possess the earth, Matt. 5:5). Verse 27: “Then the sovereignty and the dominion and greatness of the all the kingdoms **under the whole heaven** will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One...**Their** Kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom and all dominions will serve and obey **them**.” Cp. Rev. 3:9: enemies of the church will be forced to bow down.

Why would you want to go to heaven when Jesus will not be there?!

“Blessed are the meek, for they will possess the land/earth and dwell in it for ever” (Jesus referring in Matt. 5:5 to Ps. 37:9-11, 18, 22, **29**, 34).

Are you ready for this destiny? Note the correct translation, “obey them” (the saints, Dan. 7:27) preserved in RSV, CEB, CJB, GWN, NRSV TNK, Moffat, *International Critical Commentary* on Daniel.

Our hope is the vision of the future theocracy foreshadowed or actually predicted in the entire OT. God appears to be so delighted with the prospect of future peace on earth, when “the whole world will be at peace and they break forth into singing” (Isa. 14:7), that He dedicates most of Scripture to this topic. No wonder the whole hope of Messianic peace, and the cessation of all war (Isa. 2:1-4), the end to Isis, has been so totally derailed by the grand mistake that “heaven” is the object of the faith!

“Don’t be afraid, little flock, because your Father is delighted to **give** you the Kingdom” (Luke 12:32). “**Theirs** is the Kingdom of Heaven” (Matt. 5:3, 10).

The scene at the beginning of the millennium, the first stage of the future Kingdom of God on earth, is exactly described by that famous Psalm 2. Nations unwilling to submit to Jesus and the saints will be eliminated. They are strongly advised to submit to the new theocratic government. The whole OT is either a shadow or type (Judges, Kings) or a clear prophecy and vision of the great theocracy to come. 16 prophets transport you into the decisive time between the great tribulation and the arrival of Jesus with his glorified immortalized saints. This is true greatness, promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets and saints (see Matt. 8:11). It is the greatness lost by Adam and regained in Messiah Jesus. “What is man that you care about him, and the Son of Man that you take thought for him? You have made him a bit lower than the angels and **crowned him with honor and glory**. You have put everything under his feet” (Ps. 8). This is the storyline and plot of the whole Bible and the Kingdom Gospel. And the destiny of man in Christ. It is “the economy of the future about which we speak” (Heb. 2:5; Isa. 51:16; Ps. 102, LXX).

In that Kingdom the saints will be like **holy** angels as to immortality, and they will not be “married or given in marriage” (Luke 20:34-38).

The two brothers who sought prime positions in the coming Kingdom were not told that there is no such hierarchy! (Mark 10:37-40). They were told that the positions could be achieved by a degree of suffering and that God makes the appointments. The one who does well with his/her talent is praised by Jesus “Well done, good and faithful servant. Take charge of and be in permanent authority over 10 cities” (Luke 19:17, 19; Matt. 25: 21, 23). Are you ready and prepared for this? Has the energy of this hope invaded your life? What happened to the least talented who produced nothing is a threat indeed. The worthless servant was hurled into outer darkness. Talents must be used in support of the Great Commission.

As John said, we are all to strive for “a full reward” (2 John 8). “Watch yourselves that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a *full* reward.” The same trenchant warning was given to the Church at Laodicea, where as a recent speaker at CWS pointed out, Jesus did not observe the advice from the movie *Bambi* that “If you can’t say something nice, don’t say nothin’ at all.” Jesus threatened the lukewarm with exclusion from salvation.

The Philadelphia church (Rev. 3:7) is the one to follow: “I know your deeds: Look, I have placed an open door before you [the internet?], which no one can shut, because you have a little power and have kept my word [Kingdom of God Gospel] and have not denied my name [cp Acts 8:12]. I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who claim to be Jews and are not, to come and bow down [Rev. 3:9, *proskuneo*, ‘worship,’ cp. Isa 45:14, where the true Israel is actually supplicated (prayed to) and bowed down to] at your feet and make them know that I have loved you. Because you have kept the word of my perseverance [Luke 8:15], I will also preserve you from the hour of testing which is about to come on the entire world, to test those who dwell on the earth. I am coming quickly; hold fast to what you have [cp. Luke 8:11-12] so that no one will take away your crown.”¹³

The Kingdom Destiny of the faithful is a massive Bible theme. And love and faith are *based on and derived from* hope (Col. 1:4).

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¹³Rom. 5:17; 2 Tim. 2:12, Rev. 5:10; 2:26, 27; 3:21; 20:1-6, and 2 Tim. 4:1-2 where the Greek reads most easily: “I solemnly declare to you, in the presence of God and of Messiah Jesus, who is going to judge the living and dead, both his appearing and his Kingdom. **Preach that message.**”