

Intense Reflections on the Bible in 2009

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The Gospel has become cloudy and vague in the minds of churchgoers. This is a national disaster. A random survey shows that the public think that the Gospel means “we should love each other,” or “keep the commandments,” or “believe Jesus died for sinners” or anything else deemed to be “a good thing.”

This situation is alarming to say the least. The Devil is a master of what is vague and uncertain. Christians cannot afford the risk of having a vague Gospel. The Gospel in the New Testament, as Jesus preached it and as Paul preached it, is *firstly* about the Kingdom of God, that is God’s restoration program which is to culminate in the return of Jesus to this earth, in a single arrival, to raise the faithful dead from the sleep of death. With the faithful who happen to be still alive when Jesus arrives, we will all go up into the air to meet the arriving royal personage and accompany him back to the earth where he is headed. There is no prior coming seven years earlier. If there were the second coming would become a second and third coming. Jesus will come back once and for all and he will inaugurate the Kingdom of God as an all-pervasive revolutionary government. Christians are to prepare now with daily urgency to be “counted worthy” (Paul’s phrase in 2 Thess. 1:5) to assist the Messiah in the government of that future Kingdom of God on earth. Revelation 5:10 and Matthew 5:5 say it all in beautiful summary. The Christian faith is also encapsulated in the statement with which Mark starts his Gospel: “Repent and believe God’s Gospel about the Kingdom of God” (1:14-15). It is the habit of the writers of the Bible (says Gordon Wenham in his *Word Biblical Commentary* on Genesis 43:17) to open with a summary statement and then develop that summary, unpacking it in more and more detail. This is exactly what the NT does. There is no foundation to the faith apart from that foundation about the Kingdom laid down by Jesus, the first preacher of salvation (Heb. 2:3). With this clarion cry to the human race to believe God’s Kingdom program, Jesus burst on the world and continues to proclaim through his body the same message. Indeed this (well-known, i.e. to them) Gospel of the Kingdom is to be preached in the whole world, and then will the end come (Matt. 24:14).

It is essential that we get a firm grasp on that Gospel of the Kingdom, repeated over and over again by a number of synonyms, notably the **word/word of God**. I will not tire of pointing out that “word of God” means the Gospel of the Kingdom and is not just a synonym for the Bible. By “word” is meant the creative activity of God in Jesus to recreate us and make us fit for immortality. Indeed in that thunderclap verse in 2 Timothy 1:10, Jesus came to “bring life and immortality to light by means of the Gospel” — “he made unending life come to light through the good news” (BBE). That is quite a statement and needs to be meditated upon several times a week, if not several times a day!

A few of the leading authorities and commentaries have noted the brilliant summary by Peter of his master’s immortality message. The words of Peter echoing Jesus in his parable of the sower are found in that spectacular passage in 1 Pet. 1:22: “Now that you have purified yourselves by obedience to the truth,” he begins. Had not Jesus said the same thing: “You are cleansed, pure through the word I spoke to you” (John 15:3). “The truth” is another way of saying “word” or word of the Gospel, or word of the Kingdom (Matt. 13:19). Then, Peter goes on, we are to love each other sincerely from that purified heart (note that the love is based on a prior acceptance of the Gospel). Now the basis for Peter’s whole point: “For, you see, you have been born again, not of mortal seed but of immortal seed, through the living and abiding word of God...and that is the word which was preached to you as Gospel” (see 1 Pet. 1:23-25). Now Barclay: “The Christ-filled life is the life of brotherly love...The Christian is a man who has been reborn not of mortal but of immortal seed.” John spoke of Jesus urging exactly that

necessity of rebirth, in conversation with Nicodemus. John also spoke of Christians as “those who were born not of blood, nor of the will of man but of God” (John 1:13). Barclay goes on to observe that “the Christian is remade [cp. a ‘makeover’] by **the entry into him of the seed of the word and the picture is that of the parable of the sower**” (Matt. 13, Mark 4 and Luke 8).

Peter has directed us right back to the source of all good Gospel preaching, namely the Kingdom Gospel preaching of Jesus and the Master’s brilliant account of how everything in the quest for immortality depends on our intelligent reception of the Gospel/word of the Kingdom. It is that Gospel which contains the germ and seed of immortality, which when allowed to grow and bear fruit will result in our immortalization at the Parousia. Without this center to the Gospel, the Gospel is vague and is failing to attract my colleague Brits to the tune of 98% in London who do not darken the door of a church except to pay lip service to the system when they are hatched, matched and dispatched.

The death rate, I have observed, is 100% in every nation. One death per person is standard. The only remedy available is the Gospel of the Kingdom, which can result in our eventually beating death altogether, by being given indestructible life at the return of Jesus. You would expect the whole world to be beating down the doors to hear about this promise of living forever. But it is not so.

It is not “all about money” as one local preacher maintains. It is all about getting a grasp of the seed/word of immortality. It is all about being reborn by having imparted to us the divine nature (1 Pet. 1:4) via God’s seed, as preached by Jesus in the parable of the sower. Paul and Jesus spoke of those who are “born of the spirit,” and Peter and Jesus of those who are born of the word. “The words I have spoken to you,” Jesus said, “they are [i.e. they contain] spirit and life” (John 6:63). “Where else are we to go?” Peter inquired. “You have the words of life” (John 6:68). What else counts? “The Christian cannot continue relentless in sin because the seed of God dwells in him and he has been born of God” (1 John 3:9). As newborn babes (not fetuses, as Herbert Armstrong said, not understanding the word beget in English or the Greek) — as already “newborn babes” we are to seek the milk of the word. James echoes the same teaching — all the writers are on the same page — “You have been brought forth from a pregnancy by the word of God” (James 1:18). The image here is of the birth of a child from a mother.

The Oxford Bible Commentary: “Life springs from God’s **word**...Rebirth by the word comes about through entering the new community that is the redeemed people of God constituted by **the word**.” So Christian rebirth is derived from the word of the Kingdom preached by Jesus. We hear much about being “born of the spirit,” but how rarely do we hear about being born of the word, the word as properly defined as the Kingdom Gospel word? Speaking of the *spore, seed* (1 Pet. 1:22) *which produces our rebirth to immortality*, Charles Bigg, Regius Professor at Oxford, wrote in 1910: “The better explanation is found in the parable of the sower; compare Luke 8:11 ‘the seed (*sporos*) is the word of God’” (ICC). This is a brilliant observation, but it never reached the public with any clarity. The *Hastings Dictionary of the Bible* noted briefly in its article on “regeneration”:

The parable of the **sower** implies that the specific life of the Kingdom arises in the human heart by the sinking in of the gospel [of the Kingdom] and its producing as it were a **new root of personality**; and it is intimated, though only in private to chosen disciples, that the true faith is dependent on a divine factor at work behind the human (Matt. 16:17). This latter case suggests that the merely implicit form of the profound truth of regeneration occurs at least in the ministry of Christ’s ordinary preaching is due, partly at least, to its popular character, as adjusted to the needs of the poor and the simple, in contrast to theologians like Nicodemus.... St. Peter: While yet the idea of regeneration and that of individuals by the ‘**divine seed**’ or ‘**word of God**’ is firmly grasped (1 Pet.

1:23. cp. v 3 .CP. PARABLE OF THE SOWER)¹. **The apostle seems possessed by his Master's teaching as to the child like spirit and the divine fatherhood (2:2; 1:17).** The divine parentage involved in the new life is appealed to as the reason for the love of the brethren. Being regarded as a **congenital law of their new being**, an idea which recurs in II Pet. 1:4, where renewed human nature is set forth as 'in a true sense not God-like merely, but derivatively Divine' (Hort. Cp. I John 3:9). The word by which this comes about is clearly that of **the Gospel** (I Pet. 1:25).²

James represents the fundamental Christian experience in one great, simple declaration: "He, that is God of His own will **begat** us through the word of Truth, so that we would be a kind of firstfruits (*aparache*) of His creatures—you know it my beloved brethren" (1:18, 19). It is almost the only direct declaration of the epistle concerning the salvation experienced in Christ; but it is significant enough. It is the fact of a new life from God on which the Christian consciousness rests; not the mere fact of forgiveness of sins, or justification [which is the same thing] but an inner transformation, a spiritual renewal from the bottom of the heart, such as Jesus set before Nicodemus as the fundamental condition of sharing in the Kingdom of God (John 3:5) and such as was already required in the synoptic introduction to the Sermon on the Mount when that is rightly understood, *metanoëite* [repent]. This fundamental condition is fulfilled in the author and his readers, not by their own doings and performances, but by God's free goodness 'Of his own will, having willed this, he gave birth to us.' James immediately before had reminded them that none but good and perfect gifts could come down from the Father of lights, the pure goodness of heaven; and of that, this the best and the most perfect gift which he and his readers could receive is the full and sufficient proof. And this greatest favor of God is enhanced by the fact that in it, they have been privileged above innumerable others — that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures. God of His free goodness has chosen them before other nations, before the mass of their own people, and made them an *aparache* [firstfruits], consecrated to Him out of His whole rational creation. In them as firstfruits He has initiated humanity into the Kingdom of God. And He has done so by the *logos aletheias*, by the word of Truth, by which we are of course to think of the Gospel as the word of God's perfect revelation.

This second birth by the word has sometimes been described as a mystic element peculiar to James; but in this the fact is overlooked that the same view, only somewhat more diffusely stated, is repeated in the first letter of Peter (I Pet. 1:23-25), and also that both authors only repeat a fundamental thought of Jesus. When, in the parable of the sower, Jesus compares the word preached by him to good seed which he scatters in the heart, and wherever it finds good soil, it brings forth a new development of life leading to good fruits, what is that but the new birth through the word of Truth? It is just a cognate image when James (1:21) describes the word of Truth as the *logos emphutos*, the implanted word which is able to save their souls, in the final judgment, as the word implanted in the heart of the readers, whose final result is their ultimate salvation (*soteria*).

The same fact of salvation is described in another way in James 2:5: "Listen, my brothers and sisters, has not God chosen the poor of this world, that they may be rich in faith and heirs of the Kingdom which God has promised to those who love Him?"... This confirms our idea that the word of truth through which God has regenerated the poor was Jesus' preaching of the Kingdom. In the words "heirs of the Kingdom which he has

¹The parenthesis is part of the article, not mine.

² Salvation that is in Christ: the second birth. Willibald Beyschlag, Halle, 1891. *New Testament Theology*, Vol. 1, p. 350.

promised,” we have echoes in the word “Kingdom” of the main theme of Jesus. We recognize an unmistakable echo of the introductory words of the Sermon on the Mount (Luke 6:20; Matt. 5:3). But we see at the same time that James, like the first apostles, conceives of the Kingdom as still future. It is promised, they are chosen to inherit it, but they have not yet inherited it; they are rich but only in faith. The predominating tendency of the primitive apostolic Christianity to dwell in the future meets us here again, and will still further meet us. The idea of the Kingdom as already present is not yet formally appropriated, though being born again and rich in faith the present possession of salvation is fully felt. Besides the idea of the Kingdom, there likewise appears that of life, true eternal life, as a designation of salvation, and it is also conceived as in the future and is described as the very substance of the Gospel (cp. crown of life which he promised to those who love Him, with 2:5, the Kingdom which he has promised to those who love Him). This corresponds to the kindred meaning of the two words which we have noted in the synoptic teaching of Jesus. As salvation, proper, is regarded as future, the Gospel of Jesus in this respect appears under the OT idea of the promise (1:12. 2:5). On the other hand, which is still more remarkable evidence of the OT form of his Christian thought, the author conceives it, in order to emphasize what value it has for the Christian even now.

Next in importance to the great Kingdom Gospel idea of Jesus, so excellently I believe recovered by the early Abrahamics (cp. Wiley Jones’ *Gospel of the Kingdom* available at our website) is the question of who man is. One of the very significant events of the recent past is the help we are getting from the ubiquitous Bishop of Durham, Tom Wright, a brilliant writer. If he were not part of the establishment I think he would be even clearer, but listen to what he has to say about the confusion (“muddle” is his politer word) on what happens to the dead when they die. From his book *For All the Saints* (2003): “What happened to the soul?...Many readers will get the impression that I believe that every human being comes already equipped with an immortal soul. I don’t believe that. Immortality is a gift of God in Christ, not in an innate human capacity (see I Tim. 1:16)...We do not agree with particular theories (Plato’s for example) but such an entity as the soul” (pp. 71, 72). The bishop then recommends an idea which he heard from a Cambridge physicist and theologian: At death God will download our software onto his hardware until the day when He gives us new hardware on which to run our software once more. The bishop then says, “This leaves vague the question of what lies exactly in the intermediate state, before the resurrection.” The bishop’s complaint has been the cry of Abrahamics and others and unitarians from the Reformation time:

I have been increasingly aware of a mismatch between what the earliest Christians believed about life after death...and what many ordinary Christians seem to believe on the subject today...I have come to the conclusion that what we do and say in church is increasingly at odds with anything that can be justified from the Bible or the earliest Christian traditions...My fear is that we have been simply drifting into a muddle and a mess, putting together bits and pieces of traditions, ideas and practices in the hope that they will make sense. They don’t...I think it is time to speak clearly and decisively (xiv).

I take my cue from the Anglican bishop and want also to speak decisively. He then reminds us of the huge edifice of error erected by the Roman Catholics: “Souls enjoying the beatific vision now are according to Catholics still awaiting eventual resurrection, but this aspect [resurrection] has played very little part in most official and popular accounts of the ‘saints.’ Indeed sometimes the resurrection has even come to be used as a synonym for ‘going to heaven at death’ which is about as misleading as it could be” (p. 2). I add this comment: such a view, i.e. that the faithful dead are already in heaven, embodied, is a dangerous flirting with what Paul called a cancer in the church, naming Hymenaeus and Philetus who say that “the resurrection has already happened and are disturbing the faith of some” (2 Tim. 2:18). It is true that Protestants

offer no alternative route to heaven, via a post-mortem purgatory, but they nevertheless arrive at the same anti-biblical point of view when they posit “heaven at death” and thus reduce the all-important future resurrection of Christians to an almost never-mentioned footnote! There are ways of denying that resurrection by just making nothing of it.

The bishop at one point traces all this confusion to what he calls “a loss of confidence in the biblical promises.” How true that is. But lack of confidence in the Bible’s promises is more accurately called unbelief, and needs attention urgently.

Then the bishop refers to some of the early fathers as believing that Jesus, while in Hades for three days, released the pre-Christian faithful from Hades and took them to heaven. But please be aware that this is just another antedating device to diminish the need for the resurrection scheduled for the future Second Coming of Jesus. The release of people from Hades before that resurrection is based on a popular fable circulating under the title “Gospel of Nicodemus.” 1 Peter 3:18-20 was then pulled in for support. But this does not work at all. Jesus was put to death as a human and as we know was dead for three days. Then he was made alive as a spirit, resurrected person. Following that he announced his astonishing return to life (forever) to the demonic spirits who disobeyed at the time before the flood.

When it comes to the word “hell” scholars admit that the King James Version introduced a very serious confusion by translating two entirely contrasted words, Hades/Sheol, the place of all the dead, good and bad, when they die, and Gehenna, a place of destructive fiery punishment to be brought into existence as the second death at the Parousia of Jesus (Rev. 19).³ Wright is perfectly correct to point out that “the Protestant Reformers achieved a remarkable coup by abolishing the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory but they left untouched and unreformed much of the traditional picture of heaven and hell...and never really explained how either of them fitted into the New Testament’s language about *resurrection*” (p. 18).

This is where Wright begins to be really incisive. He titles a chapter “Resurrection Is Still Future.” He then refers to the “bodily resurrection.” But that shows his deep-seated attachment to the very tradition he partially tries to correct. There is no need to say “bodily resurrection.” In the Bible resurrection is always a person or body “some-body” coming alive after being dead in Hades/Sheol/gravedom. It is rather like what seems odd to some English speakers when they hear Americans speak of “horseback riding.” How else would you ride a horse? Or in connection with a bicycle, a foot pedal. Where else would you put your foot but on the pedal? In the Bible resurrection automatically means the return of dead persons to life, and without a body they are no-bodies. They are not anybody. But Wright rams home the verse which should be standard conversation in all Christian circles, 1 Corinthians 15:23. Those who are Christians will be made alive at his Parousia. And not before. “They will be raised as Christ has been raised.” We will all be raised from death by resurrection (unless we survive to the future coming). And this will happen when Jesus comes back. This ought to, but it has not, supply the mental furniture of every Christian. But a totally different concept has prevailed — that of immediate heaven and hell at death.

Again, Wright is with us. Listen to this, enough to provoke a few hallelujahs as truth struggles to be heard:

We should remember especially that the use of the word “heaven” to denote the ultimate goal of the redeemed, though hugely emphasized by medieval piety and mystery plays and the like and still almost universal at a popular level, is *severely misleading* [What is

³*Hastings Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. II, p. 243: “In our KJV the word ‘hell’ is unfortunately used as the rendering of three distinct words with different ideas...It is now an entirely misleading rendering, especially in the NT passages.” RV substituted Hades for “hell” in the NT. This improves the NT. The American revision wisely put Sheol always in the OT and Hades in the New. “Hades/Sheol is the common gathering place for the departed, into which all *alike go down*” (p. 275, my emphasis).

the church doing teaching “severely misleading” things on basic issues?]. Heaven does not begin to do justice to the Christian hope.

Wright is very honest here: “I am repeatedly frustrated by how hard it is to get this point [about heaven] through the thick wall of traditional thought and language that most Christians put up.” (Did not Jesus say that worship was in vain when based on misleading tradition?) But may I express my own frustration that Wright cannot get rid of his own tradition about a two-stage journey to the Christian’s ultimate goal. He thinks that we are to get “life after life after death.” That is entirely misleading. We are going to be made alive once, after being dead! Wright’s main prop is Paul’s line in Philippians 1:22, where he hopes “to depart and be with Christ.” But what Wright does not see is that in the New Testament death is sometimes, though rarely, viewed from a subjective point of view. If you are thinking about your own death, and if you know that you will be sleeping in the grave until Jesus comes, you can very reasonably and naturally hope to “depart and [in the next second of your conscious awareness] be with Christ” when he comes back. After all we have exactly this model in the statement in Hebrews 9:27 that “it is appointed to all men once to die and after that the judgment.” Exactly. But how long “after that”? We all know that judgment belongs to the events of Jesus’ future coming when rewards and judgments are meted out. Wright is kind enough to give some nodding approval to our view here: “Some have thought that Paul must mean [by his frequent use of sleep for death] an unconscious state from which one would be brought back to consciousness at the resurrection, so much so, perhaps, that it will seem as though we have passed straight from the one to the other.” That is exactly what Paul means when he speaks of departing to be with Christ.

But when Paul speaks, with vast numbers of Bible verses, of what he is looking forward to, it is “to be with Christ forever.” And how is this possible? Simply by expecting, believing and hoping for the resurrection and catching up to the meeting in the sky, as Jesus approaches the earth at his return. This is an exceedingly simple picture of the saints all being caught up to meet and greet the approaching royal personage as he makes his way towards the earth and the throne which will belong to him in Jerusalem.

The beautiful doctrine of the Second Coming of Jesus has become the subject of endless pointless debates. It has been cut in two, made into two stages. All this is unnecessary confusion. Paul is quite clear: Those who are alive and remain will be caught up together with the rising dead in Christ for the meeting (1 Thess. 4:17). This is Paul’s unpacking of his immediately preceding statement that the Lord Jesus will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. Paul explains: Just as Jesus died (went down) and rose up again so it will be with the Christian faithful. Some of them will have died (gone down) and they will all be raised so that Jesus can bring them with him as he comes to the earth. How do you get Christians to come with Jesus if they are dead? Quite easy. You resurrect them from the sleep of the dead and catch them up to meet Jesus so that the whole Christian entourage can come to the earth with Jesus, accompanying him.

This precious passage has been abused to smuggle in the notion that Christians are really not dead (just their bodies) so that the “resurrection” is no longer a biblical resurrection but the riveting on again of a disembodied soul to a spiritual body. The “rapture/resurrection” event has been cut in half or even in three (i.e. pre-trib, post-trib — or worse — pre-trib, mid-trib and post-trib). But all this is simply to ignore Jesus’ words to the Church through the apostles: “Immediately after [post] the tribulation of those days, the sun will be darkened... and he will gather the elect from the four points of the compass.” Jesus here quotes Deuteronomy 30 where Israel is to be gathered from one end of the sky to the other, the Hebraism for north, south, east and west. There is no secret pre-trib coming of Jesus which would make a second and third coming, just as speaking of Jesus as God makes a second God. In every case we see division and multiplication causing chaos out of simplicity. There is one who is God; man is one whole being,

not divisible into two at death; and we are to expect one future second coming of Jesus to raise the dead and bring us all into the Kingdom of God as our inheritance.

Psalm 110:1 to the Rescue

The mother of all muddles which has afflicted the church system is undoubtedly the issue about who Jesus and God are. Look at a typical reading into Matthew of the traditional Incarnation doctrine. On Luke 1:35:

The child she shall conceive is a *holy thing*, and therefore must not be conceived by *ordinary generation*, because he must not share in the common corruption and pollution of the human nature. He is spoken of emphatically, *That Holy Thing*, such as never was; **and he shall be called *the Son of God*, as the Son of the Father by eternal generation**, as an indication of which he shall now be formed by the Holy Ghost in the present conception. His human nature must be so produced, as it was fit that should be which was to be taken into union with the divine nature.

[On Matt. 1]: It is *Biblos Geneseos* — a *book of genesis*. The Old Testament begins with the book of the generation of the world, and it is its glory that it does so; but the glory of the New Testament *herein* excels, that it **begins with *the book of the generation of him that made the world* [!]**. As God, *his outgoings were of old, from everlasting* (Mic. 5:2), and none can declare that generation; but, **as man, he was sent forth in the fullness of time, born of a woman, and it is that generation which is here declared.**⁴

Note the typical and extraordinary misinformation offered by the *MacArthur Study Bible*. This is an unprecedented false fact offered by source after source. Commenting on Jesus' quotation of Psalm 110:1, which surely must rank as the most important verse in the Bible, cited and alluded to in the NT more by far than any other verse of the OT, the 88th verse of book 5 of the Psalms, MacArthur says:

In this quote from the Hebrew text (Ps. 110:1) the first word is Yahweh, which is God's covenant name. [*So far so good.*] The second word for "Lord" is a different word that **the Jews used as a title for God**. Here David pictures God speaking to the Messiah whom David calls his "Lord." David would not have called one of his descendants "Lord." Thus the Messiah is more than the son of David — he is also the Son of God. Jesus was proclaiming the Messiah's deity...The inescapable implication is that Jesus was declaring his deity...Using this passage Christ also declared his deity in the gospels (Matt. 22:44;

⁴ Called the *Father* here, not in contradistinction to the other persons of the sacred Trinity, and to exclude them from the Godhead, but in contradistinction to all creatures that were made by God, and whose formation is attributed to each of these three in other places of scripture, and not appropriated to the Father alone. God the Father, as *Fons et fundamentum Trinitatis* — *as the first person in the Godhead, and the original of the other two*, stands here for the Deity, which yet comprehends all three, the name God being sometimes in scripture ascribed to the Father, *kat exochen*, or *by way of eminency*, because he is *fons et principium Deitatis* (as Calvin observes), *the fountain of the Deity* in the other two, they having it by communication from him: so that there is but one God the Father, **and yet the Son is God too, but is not another God**, the Father, with his Son and Spirit, being the one God, but not without them, or so as to exclude them from the Godhead. 2. There is to us but one Lord, one Mediator between God and men, even Jesus Christ. Not many mediators, as the heathen imagined, but one only, by whom all things were created and do consist, and to whom all our hope and happiness are owing — **the man Christ Jesus; but a man in personal union with the divine Word, or God the Son**. This very man hath God made both Lord and Christ, Acts 2:36. Jesus Christ, in his human nature and mediatorial state, has a delegated power, a name given him, though above every name, that at his name every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that he is Lord. And thus he is the only Lord, the only Mediator, that Christians acknowledge, the only person who comes between God and sinners, administers the world's affairs under God, and mediates for men with God. All the lords of this sort among heathens are merely imaginary ones. Note, It is the great privilege of us Christians that we know the true God, and true Mediator between God and man: *the true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent*, John 17:3.

Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42, 43), by arguing that only God could have been Lord to King David.⁵

Will someone write urgently to the producers of this Bible? The second “lord” is absolutely not the “word that the Jews used for God” (which would make two Gods!). It is in fact the title *adoni*, not *Adonai*, which in all of its 195 occurrences denotes man and not God! We need a revolution when the public sees how it has been so badly misinformed. This Psalm 110:1 defines the relationship of the Son to the Father, as the one mediator between God and man, the man Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 2:5).

The Bible is not just a book about “being a good person.” It is a book about getting one’s eyes open to truth and believing what is true. Christian evangelism must always be dedicated to saying what is true and denying what is false. Knowledge in the Bible has a strong moral dimension (Cp. FF Bruce on II Thess. 2:12⁶: “**As in Rom. 1:21-28, truth and falsehoods have moral implications. To reject the truth is to reject the will of God. To embrace falsehood is to take pleasure in unrighteousness**”). “You are mistaken,” Jesus said to the Sadducees, “not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God” (Matt. 22:29). And in Paul’s famous words: “They are perishing because the *love of the truth* they did not accept in order to be saved; so that all might be judged who took pleasure in evil” (2 Thess. 2:10). Failure to love and teach truth is called evil here. If they accepted the word (of the Kingdom), Jesus said in Mark 4:11, 12, they would repent and be forgiven. How far removed is this from popular ideas about salvation. “It is all about heaven,” they keep saying. But it is not: It is all about the restored Davidic Kingdom when Jesus comes to reign on earth — and preparing now for that great day. We must be careful that our language does not betray us as advocates of Plato, rather than of Messiah! By study and prayer we can cleanse ourselves by believing the word/s of Jesus. That is the key: to believe what Jesus said, while on earth and later through Paul and the others. “You are cleansed by the word/Gospel I have spoken to you” (John 15:3) “Blessed are the clean in heart.”

⁵ *Study Bible*, pp. 1457, 1404, 831.

⁶ *Word Biblical Commentary* on II Thess.

The Gospel of the Kingdom/Land, based on Promises to Abraham (Matt. 5:5; Rom. 4:13; Rev. 5:10, Gal. 3:29)

- JESUS ABOLISHED DEATH AND REVEALED IMMORTALITY IN THE GOSPEL (II Tim 1:10)
- MADE POSSIBLE BY THE SACRIFICIAL, SUBSTITUTIONARY DEATH OF JESUS

As Taught by Jesus, Matt. Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Peter, James

- Isa. 55:10, 11: My word is seed to the “sower” and bread to the “eater,” and it will achieve what I desire.
- Holy Seed (Isa. 6:13)
- The immortality program or “Operation Immortality” as unanimously announced as the “Gospel of Salvation” by all the NT writers (Jude referred to “the faith once and for all delivered” (v.3)

WORD OR TRUTH=GOSPEL=SPIRIT OF TRUTH=GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM=PREPARING TO GOVERN WORLD
WITH JESUS (MATT. 19:28, DAN. 7:27, REV. 2:26, 3:21)

How God transmits His immortality (divine nature, based on promises, II Peter 1:4,) to mortal humans:
“Your Word =Truth” (Jn. 17:17) **REGENERATION** (Tit. 3:5) “The Spirit = the Truth” (I Jn. 5:6)
Believing as Abraham did (Gal. 3:6, 8) =Being saved (Luke 8:12) =Being born of God/seed (I John 3:9)

Peter	John	JESUS	Paul	James
<p><i>Born of word, seed</i> <i>I Pet 1:22ff.</i> <i>I Pet. 1:3</i></p>	<p><i>Born of seed/ spirit</i> <i>Jn. 3:3, 5</i> <i>Born of God (Jn. 1:13)</i> <i>Seed dwells in him</i> <i>(I John 3:9)</i></p>	<p><i>Born of seed, word</i> <i>of KINGDOM, born</i> <i>of spirit</i> <i>Luke 8:11 Matt. 18:3 Luke 18:17</i> <i>become children</i></p>	<p><i>Born of spirit</i> <i>Gal. 4:29 Eph. 1:13</i></p>	<p><i>Born of word of truth</i> <i>James 1:18</i></p>

**The Gospel of the Kingdom/Land, based on Promises to Abraham
(Matt. 5:5; Rom. 4:13; Rev. 5:10, Gal. 3:29)**

*Heb. 1:1-2 **START HERE** → Heb 2:3; 5:9; I Tim. 6:3; Heb. 5:9. II John 9; Jn. 12:48*

Paul	Mark	Luke	John	JESUS	Peter	Paul	James
Washing of word (Eph. 5:26)				GOSPEL=WORD seed Of the KINGDOM		word of truth	word of truth
Spirit of the Promise Eph. 1:13 Tit. 3:5	Word Mk. 2:2; 4:14	Word of God Luke 8:11	Spirit of the Truth Jn. 15:26	Matt. 13:19 promise (Matthew Mark Luke)	Born again of seed I Pet. 1:22ff.	Born of promise Gal. 4:28	Born of word of truth James 1:18

WORDS CONVEY SPIRIT							
Deut. 18:15-18	Isa. 59:21	Jer. 1:9	John 6:63	Zech. 7:12	Prov. 1:13	Job 26:4	II Sam. 23:2

<p>ALL BASED ON PROMISES MADE TO ABRAHAM (Gal. 3:8): Progeny, Posterity, Property and Blessing, confirmed in royal covenant with David (II Sam. 7) ALL BASED ON THE GRACE OF THE ONE GOD OF JESUS AND ISRAEL</p>
<p>Gen, 15:6 “Abraham believed God and it was counted as making him right” (Rom. 4:3; Gal. 3:6)</p>