



CHURCH OF GOD
GENERAL CONFERENCE

THE RESTITUTION HERALD

PROCLAIMING THE GOOD NEWS OF THE **KINGDOM OF GOD** | ACTS 3:21

... heaven must receive [Jesus] until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

A Lesser Known Doctrine

By John Railton (IN)

Let's begin with a simple definition of the word *doctrine*. A doctrine is a *teaching* or *belief* held by a church, political party, or anyone, really. Most readers of this magazine would no doubt agree on several important doctrines, such as the gospel of the kingdom of God, the unity of God, the name of Jesus, the sleep of the dead, the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, the second coming of Jesus, the grace of God, the kingdom on earth, etc. This article will focus on a lesser-known doctrine, one that some might never consider to even *be* a doctrine. But it very much is. You'll see that as you consider the words of God, Jesus, Paul, and John.

We won't focus on any of the above doctrines, but rather simply on the *importance* of truth, whatever that truth may be. One might refer to it as the *essentiality* of truth. I'll tell you what prompts this article. The Bible presents a two-part gospel – the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus. And yet, I've heard good Church of God people say *this* part of the gospel doesn't really matter; *that* part of the gospel doesn't matter. The identity of Jesus doesn't matter. The location or timing doesn't matter. The promises to Abraham don't matter. Baptism doesn't matter. These are not *salvation* issues. **WE SHOULD STOP SAYING THAT!** It's not *our* place to determine what matters and what doesn't, who's saved and who isn't. *I* don't want to be responsible for misleading someone, telling them this or that doesn't matter, when *maybe*, just *maybe it does!* God has given judgment over to a man. It's not you, and it isn't me. His name is Jesus. *Our* commission is to

preach the gospel, make *disciples*, *baptize* them, and *teach* them to *obey* everything Jesus commanded the apostles. You may not agree with me, or Jesus, John, Paul, and others, but I hope you'll hear us out.

Truth matters to God! Think about the first lie in scripture. The serpent told Eve, "*You will be like God! You will not surely die!*" How did that work out? There were some hard lessons! The *serpent* found out that there are serious consequences when you don't *tell* the truth! *Eve* found out there are serious consequences when you don't *believe* the truth! *Adam* found out there are serious consequences when you don't *stand up for the truth*. Proverbs 6 lists seven things God hates. Included are a lying tongue and a false witness! Proverbs 12 says, "*The LORD detests lying lips, but delights in men who are truthful!*" Revelation 21:8 lists a number of sins that will land you in the lake of fire. It doesn't just include *liars*, but *all* liars! Truth matters to God!

Truth matters to *Jesus*! The word *truth* is in the gospels 105 times. Eighty of those times, it's Jesus saying, "*I tell you the truth!*" That's probably his favorite phrase. It's interesting, then, in the book of John, there are 25 times he *doubles down* on the importance of truth. Instead of saying, "*Truly I say unto you . . .*" he instead says, "*Truly, truly I say unto you . . .*" "*Verily, verily . . .*" "*Amen, amen . . .*" Consider Jesus' words in John 8:31-32. There *will* be a quiz. "*To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, 'If you hold to my teaching, you are re-*

(Continued on page 2)

Articles

- p1..... A Lesser Known Doctrine
- p3..... Sound Doctrine
- p4..... Book Review: Age to Come
- p5..... If Jesus Pre-existed, He Wasn't Human
- p8..... They Still Speak
- p10 Proposals for General Conference

Other Information

- p4..... ABC4U
- p7..... Articles of Faith
- p7..... Masthead
- p9..... Archives Project
- p12 Websites to explore
- p12 THE RESTITUTION HERALD Advocates

A Lesser Known Doctrine (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

ally my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." Who is speaking? (Jesus.) To whom is he speaking? (Jews who believed.) What *exactly* did Jesus say it takes to *really* be his disciple? (Hold to his teaching.) What do you suppose it means to *hold* to his teaching? What might this imply for those who do *not* hold to Jesus' teaching? What will you know if you do hold to his teaching? (Truth.) What will that accomplish for you? (You will be set free!) If we were to read a few more verses, we'd find he's talking about being free from *sin*. He's talking about *salvation* for those who hold to his teaching. To hold to his teachings would appear to be a salvation issue.

"I am the way, the truth, and the life! No one comes to the Father except through me!" (Jesus, in John 14:6). He is not *one* way among others. He is *the* way! He is the *only* way! He is not *one* truth among many. He is *the* truth! Jesus is the only way to have life in the kingdom of God! What hope does that give the Jewish community? Islam? Hinduism? Buddhism? Atheists? Those who are indifferent to Jesus? Consider Jesus' prayer for all his followers the night before he died, *"Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they may be truly sanctified"* (John 17:17-19). The simple definition of sanctify is to be *set apart*. It was and is Jesus' hope that his followers would be set apart by what? The truth! That must be our hope as well! In Matthew 7:15, Jesus warned, *"Watch out for false prophets. They will come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves!"* Later, he said, *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will say to them plainly, 'I never knew you! Away from me, you evil doers!"* False teachers in the church! Truth matters to *Jesus!*

Truth mattered to the *Apostle Paul!* Consider Acts 20:29-31 and think, who does he sound like? *"I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from among your number, men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning you night and day with tears!"* In 1 Corinthians 11:2, Paul had praised the Corinthians, *"I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the teachings just as I passed them on to you!"* But then,

maybe a year later, read II Corinthians 11:2-4. *"I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him. But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel than the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough!"* Paul was extremely frustrated! *"You put up with it easily enough!"* He's not talking about Hinduism (2000 BC), Buddhism (600 BC), or Islam (yet to come)! He's warning about perverted teachings within the church! I realize he's dead in his grave, turned back to dust, but I would hope if he were alive today that he'd never think such a thing about you, me, or the Church of God! Later in the chapter, he further says, *"For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It's not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve!"*

Paul tells us exactly what their *end* will be in Galatians 1:6-9, *"I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel, which is really no gospel at all. Evidently, some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ! But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again, if anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!"* He was astonished! He considered those who endorsed a false gospel to have *deserted the Lord!!* Should we, or should we not give them a pass? We can go back to the book of Acts and see exactly what gospel Paul preached. It was the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus. We must not mess with that gospel! We must not pervert that gospel! In today's vernacular, Paul says of those who do, *"Let them go to hell!"* Why does he repeat it in verse 9? For emphasis! Truth mattered to the *Apostle Paul!*

Truth mattered to the *Apostle John!* John's gospel is full of important truths, yet it's one of the most misused and misinterpreted books in the Bible. John had made it very clear in chapter 20 that he wrote so that his readers might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son

(Continued on page 3)

A Lesser Known Doctrine (cont.)

(Continued from page 2)

of God, “*and that by believing you might have life in his name!*” Apparently, this is a salvation issue, according to the Apostle John, as inspired by God!

Please read 1 John 4:1-6. John gives two telling tests as to whether we should trust various teachers. 1. Do they acknowledge the *humanity* of Jesus? 2. Do they listen to, accept, and teach the teachings of John and the other apostles?

See 2 John 1-11. In the early church, the gospel was taken from one place to another by apostles, evangelists, and other believers, much like it is done in mission work today. John praises their support and partnership with some, but warns against such a partnership with those *who do not teach the truth*. He calls it wicked work! Note John’s emphasis on truth. There was already perversion. Does it matter? John says it does. False teachers do wicked work. Those who endorse or partner with them do so as well! In his letter to Gaius, John continues to value truth, saying, “*I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in truth!*”

Truth matters to God, Jesus, Paul, John, and if we had more space, we’d see also to Peter, James, Jude, and I would hope, to all of us! The importance of truth is a biblical teaching. It’s a *doctrine*. I’m hoping we’ll each acknowledge that and value truth as did Jesus and his apostles.

So, what’s going to happen to those who do not believe the truth? We already know from Paul what will happen to those who teach a perverted gospel, but what about those they have *taught, those who believe a perverted gospel*? I’ll tell you what I think. I hope they’ll all be in the kingdom. But! *It is not my call!* Nor is it *yours!* It is *presumptuous*, and I’d suggest dangerous for us to be saying this or that doesn’t matter. Let’s *do our job and leave it to Jesus to do his!* Let’s preach the gospel, make disciples, baptize them, and teach them! I’m committed to doing just that. We should leave it up to the Lord to decide who’s in, and who isn’t!

About the Author: *John Railton has been a pastor all his adult life, having graduated from OBC in 1971. He’s pastored churches in IL, MN, and IN, most recently Family Bible Church (FBC) in Granger, IN, for the past 17 years. Since the building they had been renting has been sold, FBC is in the process of joining with Timberland Bible Church in South Bend, and will dissolve by the end of the year. You can connect with him at johнарailton@gmail.com.*

Sound Doctrine

By Clyde Randall (MN)

“Sound doctrine” is usually applied to some particular tenets of faith, such as immortality, resurrection, baptism, etc., otherwise termed “positive theology.” Of course, a correct view of these subjects will be sound doctrine, but the biblical meaning of “doctrine” goes beyond the scope of what is ordinarily termed “dogma.” The meaning of “doctrine” in the Scripture is simple and plain. The rendering of “sound doctrine” by the majority of versions is “healthful teaching.” The Diaglott translates it “wholesome teaching.” Any teaching that is from the Word of truth, which is interpreted in harmony with truth and is truth, is sound doctrine.

Repentance, forgiveness, prayer, daily living, etc., if preached from the Bible viewpoint, are just as much in the class of sound doctrine as any other subjects one can find in the Bible. All that doctrine is, scripturally, is teaching the Word of God. Wherever there is sound teaching according to the Word, there you have sound doctrine. The distinction between practical and doctrinal teaching is man-made rather than God-inspired. To speak of the gospel of the kingdom as being dogmatic in its entirety, or limiting it to practical applications, is to rob it of its full mission. The gospel is sound doctrine or teaching of the Lord which affects every necessary phase of the life that now is and the life that is to come.

The dogmatist can only see certain material aspects of the kingdom in its setting up, such as its supplanting the kingdoms of this world and the administration of justice and equity. The practicalist observes the gospel of the kingdom in its relation to man’s present needs as being “righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” But sound doctrine is wholesome teaching concerning every phase of the message. Sound doctrine is broad and all-inclusive, while dogmatism and practicalism serve in a biased field. Each is necessary, but not sufficient unto itself!—Church of God Messenger.

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Book Review: The Age To Come by Joseph Marsh

By John Tullis (OH)

The Age to Come is an interesting book concerning the kingdom beliefs of Joseph Marsh, written in 1851. Marsh is considered one of the founders of what we call the Church of God Abrahamic Faith. The work is a detailed explanation of the scriptural evidence that led Marsh to believe that the Bible is very clear that the future kingdom is a literal, earthly kingdom.

The author starts his book by presenting a challenge to the reader. Marsh asks the reader to read without prejudice. Like today, reading a work with an open mind can be challenging. But for Marsh, the challenge to read with a critical mind is crucial to properly understanding the literal truth of his argument. Marsh is so confident that his argument is rock solid that he implores the reader to believe and confess this truth before other men.

The book begins with a consideration of the four most popular, current ideas concerning the truth of the kingdom. First, the popular theory of the day was presented. This theory, which is what most Christians believed in 1851, was that the Kingdom of God was simply the church in action. This "age" of the church would last 1000 years and be converted to the "peaceful gospel of Christ" before the final judgment.

Next, Marsh explains the errors of William Miller's theory of the kingdom. With Miller, the error is in the order of events leading up to the coming of the kingdom. Miller teaches that the heavens and the earth will be promptly destroyed in a great conflagration at the coming of the Son of Man. Then, a new kingdom will be created upon the new heavens and new earth.

Thirdly, Marsh condemns the idea of the kingdom as taught by the Catholic Church. Essentially, it says the millennial kingdom had its start with the crucifixion, through the destruction of Babylon (Pagan Rome), through the rise of Gog and Magog in the future. During this time, the souls of the saints live and reign with Christ in heaven, in the first resurrection. "A day of general resurrection is coming when the body will be resurrected at the last day of the general judgment".

The fourth teaching on the kingdom is that taught by Marsh. In this version, which is similar to William Miller's teaching, the events are the same, but the timing is different. Marsh teaches that following the coming of the Son of Man, he will be declared king. All nations and all dominions will be subject to King Jesus, who will reign over all the earth. For the next 1000

years, Christ will rule a literal kingdom upon the earth alongside his saints. The present heavens and earth continue during this time. The end of the millennial kingdom will see the final destruction of Satan and the annihilation of the wicked.

The remainder of the book is a detailed exploration of the "restoration of all things," the final events at the close of the millennial kingdom, and the creation of new heavens and earth, upon which the church will exist through all eternity in the presence of God Himself.

Editor's Note: *The Age to Come* by Joseph Marsh can be accessed online at <https://cogarchives.com/publications/archives/#archive-bks>. This site contains many other early writings of Church of God authors.

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If Jesus Preexisted, He Wasn't a Human – John 17:5

By Bill Schlegel (TN)

Many trinitarians believe that Jesus' prayer in the Gospel of John 17:5 shows that Jesus pre-existed: "and now, Father, glorify thou me in thy own presence with the glory which I had with thee before the world was made" (RSV).

As with any difficult biblical passage, we must consider the context of Jesus' statement in this prayer to God (the Father). Just two sentences before, as recorded in John 17:3, Jesus prayed to God: "Father (17:1) ...this is eternal life, that they know you **the only true God**, and Jesus the Messiah whom you have sent." In John 17:5, two sentences after Jesus said that the Father is the only true God, it would be very strange for Jesus to imply that he too, Jesus himself, is also God.

Father = God

Jesus' prayer in John 17 is directed to the "Father". In the New Testament, Jesus' Father is synonymous with "God". When Jesus says "Father," he means "God." Bringing presuppositions to the text, trinitarians look at this prayer and see "God the Son" making an appeal to God the Father to give back glory that he, "God the Son," had before in a pre-human existence. But this interpretation misunderstands the fatherhood of God in the Bible. In the Bible, the fatherhood of God is a metaphor which describes the relation of God to mankind (Exo. 4:22, Isa. 63:16, Hos. 11:1, Matt. 5:45, 6:9, John 20:17). Biblically, the fatherhood of God does not describe a metaphysical relation of one person of the "godhead" to another.

Also, the Bible does not describe the glory destined for the Messiah at the right hand of the Almighty God as something that the Messiah once had, that he gave up, and was given back. Rather, the exaltation and glory of the Messiah were predicted in the Old Testament and then fulfilled in Jesus. Jesus said: "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" (Luke 24:25-26).

Speaking of things that don't yet exist, as though they exist

The trinitarian interpretation of John 17:5 fails to understand that both God, and God through His prophets, **speak of predestined things (and people) as if they already exist**. Note Jesus's words in this same John 17 prayer just 15 verses later:

"I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, ... **The glory that you have given me I have given to them**, that they may be one even as we are one" (John 17:20-22).

Here, Jesus said **he had already been given the glory** intended for him. But his glory had not literally been given since Jesus had not yet died, been raised, and exalted to the right hand of Almighty God (Luke 24:25-26). Jesus said the glory had already been given because he knew God had promised it. The granting of the glory is as "good as done," so Jesus could speak of it as if he already possessed it.

And Jesus could also speak of the **glory he had given to people who were not yet believers in him**. Some of those people that Jesus already gave glory to did not even exist when Jesus spoke these words. Just as God gave to the Messiah glory before the Messiah literally existed, here Jesus speaks of glory he had given to people before they literally existed.

Reading a couple verses further, in John 17:24, Jesus reiterated what he prayed in 17:5: "Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to behold my glory which you have given me in your love for me before the foundation of the world."

Note that Jesus basically said the same thing, but in a slightly different way. Jesus not only "had" glory with the Father (17:5), but was given glory (17:24) before the foundation of the world.

Once again, Jesus's prayer conflicts with the deity of Christ interpretation in at least two very important ways:

1. Are we to suppose that the first person of the godhead gave glory and loved the second person of the godhead only before the foundation of the world? Why not in eternity past?
2. The Father **gave** the son glory before the foundation of the world. This means there was a time even **before the foundation** of the world when the second person of the godhead did not have glory, and was **given** glory. Why did the first person of the godhead have to give glory to the second person of the godhead before the foundation of the world?

(Continued on page 6)

If Jesus Pre-existed (cont.)

(Continued from page 5)

Deity of Christ interpreters create contradictions and dilemmas like these because what they believe is not the truth.

A basic principle of interpreting Scripture is to take the words in their historical and grammatical context. In this case, we only need to listen to 15 more sentences in Jesus' prayer to get a better understanding of what Jesus meant in 17:5. In John 17:20-24, Jesus again used the language of "giving glory" and "having glory" before literal existence.

The glory that God planned for the Messiah, Jesus spoke of in the past tense, just as he spoke of the glory he would give to future believers in the past tense. Predestined things are spoken of as already existing because they are "as good as done" in God's eyes.

Another way to say this is that in the Bible, a person can "have" something before they literally have it or even before they literally exist. Jesus said the poor in spirit and those persecuted for righteousness sake have "the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:3, 10). Even though these people weren't in possession of the kingdom of heaven yet (they were poor and persecuted), they had it.

Paul said that believers in the One true God and His Messiah Jesus **had** salvation and a holy calling even before they existed. "(God) who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, **which he gave us** in Messiah Jesus before the ages began, and which now has been manifested..." (2 Timothy 1:9-10). For Paul, being "fully convinced that God is able to do what He promised" is saving faith (Romans 4:21).

Like Jeremiah was foreknown and appointed to be a prophet before being formed in his mother's womb, Jesus was foreknown and appointed to be Messiah:

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations" (Jeremiah 1:5).

Another example: Isaiah 53

Most Christians would agree that Isaiah 53 is messianic, that is, while it parallels the nation of Israel's experience, Isaiah 53 in some way tells us about the coming Messiah (John 12:37-38, 1 Pet. 2:24-25). Isaiah 53 was written hundreds of years before Jesus was born.

Yet Isaiah 53 is all in the past tense. "He grew up before him...he was despised and rejected by men...he has borne our griefs...we deemed him stricken...he was wounded...Yahweh has laid on him the iniquity of us all..." and on and on, all past tense. Did Yahweh lay on Jesus the iniquity of us all before 700 BC? Obviously not, but it is spoken of 700 years before it happened, as if it already happened.

Some call this language the "prophetic perfect tense" because the prophets' words deal with something yet to come, but the words are spoken as if it already happened, already existed. If God predestines it, it is as good as done. In the same way, Jesus could say God "had given" him glory before he received the glory.

Another example, Abram

When Abram was old and childless, God said to him, "I **have made you** the father of many nations". Really? Abram, old and childless, was **already** the father of many nations? This is because God speaks of things that don't yet exist as if they already exist (see Romans 4:17).

More problems with the trinitarian interpretation

Trinitarians create huge theological problems by saying that Jesus is recalling his own literal pre-existence and glory in John 17:5. Let's be clear: Jesus makes no claim to deity in John 17:5, let alone to be a part of a three-personed godhead. Neither did Jesus say he had glory with God from eternity past, only from before the world was, which is a strange way to describe a shared glory of two eternally existing godhead persons.

In trinitarian doctrine, "God the Son" did not give up his divine nature when he took on human nature at the incarnation, i.e., when he became "fully God and fully man". The human nature of Jesus did not have divine glory "before the world existed," so this must be the divine nature of "God the Son" speaking in John 17:5.

But can "God the Son" be fully God without His glory?

- If the Son gave up his glory, the Son is not God, since God cannot give up His glory.
- If the Son had glory **with** God, the Son is not God.
- If the Son was asking God to give him (back) glory, the Son is not God.
- If the Son was given glory before the foundation of the world (17:24), the Son is not God.

(Continued on page 7)

If Jesus Pre-existed (cont.)

(Continued from page 6)

The trinitarian interpretation of John 17:5 ends up being a tangled web of contradiction.

If trinitarians want to say that John 17:5 shows Jesus literally pre-existed, then they should be followers of the 4th-century AD Arius, who believed that the Logos (Word), was a lesser god or angel who pre-existed and took on human nature. Anyone who had glory “with” God had been given glory, then didn’t have glory “with” God, but then gets glory back again “with” God, is not God. Just like anyone who “goes to God” is not God.

A Warning

If Jesus pre-existed as God, he is not a human. He would be some other kind of creature, but not a human person. Trinitarian doctrine in the end leads to a denial of the man Jesus.

Did Adam pre-exist other than in the plan and purpose of God? Did any other human being pre-exist other than in the plan and purpose of God? (Apparently Mormons believe that humans pre-existed, but this is unbiblical). If Jesus pre-existed literally, then he is not a human being. He is something else. He is not like you or me in what makes us essentially human. The dual-natured Jesus of the Catholic creeds is a Clark Kent Superman, a science fiction, a fairy tale, a fantasy. If Jesus is God who took on flesh, he is not a human person, and we don’t have a sin offering (Romans 5:15, 17; 1 Tim. 2:5; 2 Cor. 5:21).

The Scriptures never come close to saying something like “that’s the human Jesus”, but “that’s the God Jesus”. A dual-natured Jesus is philosophical speculation, a fantasy. The death of the man (not dual-natured) Jesus on the cross, the resurrection of the man Jesus from the dead, the exaltation of the man Jesus to the right hand of Almighty God in heaven, is not a fantasy.

About the Author: *Bill Schlegel taught Bible history, geography, and Hebrew in Israel for over three decades. He is the author of the Satellite Bible Atlas (available at Amazon.com). Through Bible study, Bill came to understand that the LORD is one and that Jesus is the LORD’s human Messiah. Bill’s podcasts are at One God Report and blogs. Bill and his wife, Stephanie, live in Tennessee. You can connect with him at schlegel4@gmail.com or find material from Bill on YouTube, Spotify, or landandbible.blogspot.com.*

Articles of Faith—Still True Today

We believe:

1. In one God who is the Maker of heaven and earth (Ps. 146:5-6) and all things therein. (Gen. 1:1; Isa. 40:28; 1 Cor. 8:6; Gal. 3:20; Heb. 3:4; 1 Tim. 2:5; John 1:3.)
2. That Christ has the right to the literal throne of David, and at his second coming will sit thereon to rule the world, and over the house of Jacob forever. (Luke 1:30-33; Isa. 9:6-7.)
3. The literal return of the Jews to the land of Palestine. (Jer. 31; Ez. 36:9, 11, 22, 24; Acts 1:6, 8.) The reestablishment of the kingdom of Israel.
4. That man is wholly mortal, and immortality is obtained only through Christ and put on at the resurrection. (Rom. 2:6-7; 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:53-54; 1 Tim. 6:13-16; 2 Tim. 1:9-10.)
5. In the literal resurrection of the dead to a life of everlasting happiness, with Christ upon his throne. (Job 19:26; Psa. 17:15; Isa. 26:19; 35:10; Dan. 12:2; Luke 14:14; John 5:28-29; 11:23; Acts 4:2; 24:15; 26:8; Rom. 6:5, 8, 11; Col. 3:34; 1 Th. 4:15-16.)
6. The Church, the Bride of Christ, will rule the world jointly with him on David’s throne. (Eph. 3:5; Rom. 8:16-17; Luke 1:31, 33.)
7. The earth will be the final and eternal home of the saints. (Psa. 37:9, 11, 29, 34; Prov. 2:21; 10:30; 11:31; Zech. 14:9; Matt. 5:5.)
8. In baptism by immersion for the remission of sins. (Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3-4; Luke 24:46, 47; Col. 2:12.)
9. In the second personal appearing of Christ, at which time will be the restitution of all things. (Dan. 7:13-22; Matt. 25:31; Acts 1:9, 11; Heb. 9:28; John 14:3; Acts 3:20; 2 Thes. 2:1; 1 Thes. 1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:13, 17; Rev. 22:12.)
10. The law was done away in Christ, and the law of faith established, in which we stand. (Rom. 10:4; 8:1, 4; 7:1, 4; Gal. 3:11-12.)
11. In the promises made of God unto the fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as to our future inheritance, and to David as to rule and kingdom. (Gal. 3:8, 16, 29; Acts 26:6-7; Lk 1:30, 33; Acts 2:29, 31.)
12. In the restitution of all things spoken of by the mouth of all the holy prophets, which includes restoration of life, and the earth from under the curse. (Acts 3:19, 21; John 6:35; Rom. 5:17; Rev. 22:3.)
13. And as a prerequisite to salvation, a holy and righteous life. (Rom. 6:22; Gal. 5:22, 26; 2 Cor. 7:1; Heb. 12:10, 14.)
14. The Bible to be the only rule for our faith and practice. (John 3:39; Isa. 66:2; 2 Cor. 10:13; Gal. 6:16.)
15. The Bible to be the only true Word of God. (Mark 16:20; Col. 1:25; Tit. 1:2, 3; John 17:6; 14:17.)
16. In the final destruction of the incorrigible wicked. (Mal. 4:13; Psa. 37:10-20; Rom. 6:23.)

Adopted by Conference at Waterloo, IA, August 29-31, 1910

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THEY STILL SPEAK

“By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.” Hebrews 11:4

The Kingdom of God

By T. A. Drinkard (1937)

“And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.”— Matthew 8:11.

They will come from the east, and they will come from the west to that called meeting with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of God. In the day of the Apostle Paul, these faithful men of God were still sleeping “the sleep of death” (Psalm 13:3; Heb. 11:13). But I notice that when the seventh angel sounds his trumpet, which is the last of the series of seven, then these “prophets” are to be resurrected and given their “reward” (Rev. 11:15, 18). This is in perfect accord with Paul’s view as given in 2 Timothy 4:1. The Master affirms that they will be in the kingdom, and not only so, but “many” others as well.

What a day, and what a meeting! Can you call to mind any meeting of the past that can compare to that meeting that will take place in the Kingdom of God? And it won’t be a meeting of immaterial, bodiless spirits that have gone on to some fantastic, ethereal habitation at death, but it will be the very Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that once lived upon earth, and who are now still in the death state.

Of course, it is not revealed just what Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will say when they meet in the Kingdom of God, but I suggest that no words of human origin can be found that can portray the feelings and joy of those resurrected prophets of God. Will they talk, and will they shout the glorious news of redemption? There is no doubt of that, as it is written that the redeemed will sing “a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” (Rev. 5:9).

Don’t forget that the Kingdom of God is yet to be re-established upon the earth, as Ezekiel 21:25-27 clearly reveals. This reference is confirmed by Amos 9:11 and Acts 15:16. Get this thought again, that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are to be in the Kingdom.

Now let me say that those redeemed people of God are going to eat and drink and be very happy in the Kingdom. Sometimes I am asked why they are going to eat and drink in the Kingdom, since they will be immortal. Well, I can hardly say just why they will eat and drink, but I do know this: that according to the Master they will do this; as also will Christ.

Now for the proof of this: “And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom” (Luke 22:29, 30). And, “I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come” (Luke 22:18). Again, “I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom” (Matt. 26:29).

Thank God that beyond this vale of tears and this unhappy condition of sorrow and death lies a perfect day when God’s Kingdom will extend “from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth,” and when “they that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him,” and “all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him” (Psalm 72:8, 9, 11).

The apostles had Christ’s promise that when the Kingdom should come they would be in it. He would be there, and they would again enjoy drinking together. Of course, you can clearly see that this calls for a resurrection of those apostles that have fallen asleep in Christ.

I realize that there are “blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel” (Matt. 23:24), by false teaching to misguide hearers. I say this because there are those who, believing the Kingdom of God to have been set up on Pentecost, have said to me that Luke 24:30 and Acts 10:41 were a fulfillment of Matthew 26:29 and Luke 22:29-30. I called attention to the fact that, if so, then the Kingdom of God was established before Pentecost.

If an argument will not withstand criticism, there is something wrong somewhere. Our position has stood the test all along through the years. It has weathered the religious opposition and fires of persecution and still stands forth unscathed. Why? Because it is sustained by the Word of God.

Permit me to remind our readers to always remember that the Kingdom of God will have certain characteristics that will be closely connected thereto. In other words, the Kingdom will break to pieces all other Kingdoms (Dan. 2:44). Has it done so? If not, the conclusion is that the Kingdom has not been “set up.” The Kingdom of God will not be “set up” a thousand years or more before its characteristics are to be put into force; in other words, the enforcement of its laws.

As these articles are being written to teach the truth and expose error, I want to again remind you of that shameful practice of religious leaders who, in discussing the Kingdom question, often quote Daniel 2:44; 7:13, 14, 27; and Isaiah 2:2-4 as having been fulfilled. But question them closely, and they will “wrest” the Scriptures and tell you that you are now in the first phase of the Kingdom, and when you reach the beautiful “Isle of Somewhere,” you will then be in the upper and better phase of the Kingdom of God.

To me, this is a fine definition of nothing. It tends to rob you and me of the joy of understanding that message of the Kingdom which God intended we should have. I thank God for the reasonable intelligence with which He has blessed me, and that it is not easily carried about by human deceptions.

(Continued on page 9)

The Kingdom of God (cont.)

(Continued from page 8)

When Jesus Christ comes again, then he sits upon his throne (Matt. 25:31). When he sits upon his throne, the saints, or princes, sit upon the same throne with him (Rev. 3:21; 2:26, 27; Isa. 32:1; 2 Tim. 2:12).

With these indisputable facts before us, I call your attention to: "And before him shall be gathered all nations" (Matt. 25:32). Here is a world brought to the judgment of God. "All nations" are gathered before Him. What a day! What a scene! Can we contemplate the sudden change of all nations going out of business with Christ's work ahead of him? The nations are called to an account. Jesus the Christ and his saints are sitting upon the throne in the judgment hour (1 Cor. 6:2; Acts 17:31).

Two features of God's plan appear the most outstanding. One is that the nations will not escape the punishment which God has in store for them, and the other is that the judgment decision will be of a righteous nature. Again, it is written, "My determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy. For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent" (Zeph. 3:8, 9).

A world judgment has come! Nations as such are dissolved. After this national calamity has fallen and brought the desired results, then God turns to the people and gives them an opportunity to serve Him. And, too, God is going to "undo all that afflict" the oppressed (Zeph. 3:19). And He is going to dismantle every sovereign kingdom of this world (Hag. 2:22).

Why wreck and ruin our modernized governments? Why molest our advances in our scientific progress? Haven't we accomplished much in our time? With all our accomplishments, we have fallen short of the demand of the divine will. The prophet surely saw a better day for the oppressed of earth, and wrote, "When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isa. 26:9). Jesus Christ will "break in pieces the oppressor" (Psalm 72:4).

There is one special act of that day that holds my attention, and that is, "they shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for trouble" (Isa. 65:23). How many today "labor in vain"? In our own nation, less than four percent of the people own and control 90 percent of the wealth. Yet the poor are condemned because they did not save in the day of plenty. But when the day of plenty did come, it was destroyed. Our statesmen today are quarreling over financial matters, not that there isn't enough money, but to see who gets most of it. They invent ways and means of relief (?), and by the time it reaches the oppressed, it has become grief. Upon the pages of divine history, it has been written that "the love of money is the root of all evil" (1 Tim. 6:10).

Everything is so unsafe and insecure. The age-old warfare between capital and labor is surely coming to a finish, slowly but surely. Our president, when he first became the Chief Executive, saw that something had to be done, and much that he started was vetoed by the Supreme Court. And still the argument goes on, and while it does, poverty and want still hold our land in their grasp, and millions are in need. And in the face of

this shameful scene, clergymen still preach that God has already "set up" His Kingdom. There are none so blind as those who will not see.

The gospel message of the Kingdom of God is a doctrinal message, and every member-elect of the church Christ is building is duty bound to preach only doctrine. Tell me, if you can, how you can preach spiritual truth without preaching doctrinal truth? All truth is spiritual truth, and as such, it is doctrinal truth, because it comes from a spiritual source. No distinction should be made in the terms.

The signs of the times clearly show that "evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth" (Jer. 25:32). And "all the kingdoms of the world, which are upon the face of the earth" are going to face the wrath of God (Jer. 25:26). He has a special plan of dealing with them, and He knows just how to do it.

Not only will God's wrath be poured out upon the financial moneychangers, but the false so-called gospel ministers are going to receive a full measure of that wrath, too, as I read, "A voice of the cry of the shepherds (the clergymen?), and a howling of the principal of the flock, shall be heard: for the Lord hath spoiled their pasture" (Jer. 25:36).

"For the Lord hath spoiled their pasture!" That element to which this refers has surely lived in a fine pasture, plenty of comfort, pleasure, and wealth. But their pasture is to be spoiled, and the principal ones will howl, and soon realize that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31), "when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth" (Isa. 2:19).

The efforts of man only promise and propose temporary relief. The Kingdom of God is the only hope for all. Its message of comfort and hope is the only message worthwhile, and may God grant us the privilege of remaining faithful to it in this age of darkness and indifference.

RESTITUTION HERALD, vol. 26 no. 23, March 9, 1937, p. 1

About the Author: *T. D. Drinkard (1888-1967) was born in Texas and spent most of his life as a traveling evangelist for the Church of God throughout the Midwest and Great Plains. He is on the first list of recognized Church of God ministers in 1921. He wrote extensively for the RESTITUTION HERALD, but he also published his own periodical called the Gospel Messenger.*

CHURCH OF GOD ARCHIVES PROJECT

As we are scanning our collection, we are seeking other material to add. If you have books, tracts, articles, sermons, writing, or publications, related to the Church of God, please email us.

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Proposed Constitution and By-Laws Amendments

For Consideration of the Delegates at Summer Conference

Proposal 1

The Bethel Church of God (Pelzer, SC) proposes adding the following sections 9-11 to Article IV of the Church of God General Conference constitution. (Existing sections 1-8 deal with the election of officers for the board, qualifications of directors, how nominations and voting are handled, the length of term, and how to handle vacancies).

ARTICLE IV Officers of the Conference

Additional Sections

Section 9. No candidate for director or elected director shall have a close relative (spouse, child, parent, sibling) as a paid employee of the college/conference.

Section 10. No candidate for director shall have a close relative (spouse, child, parent, sibling) already on the Board of Directors.

Section 11. No candidate for director shall have a person from their home congregation already on the Board of Directors.

Explanation: The purpose of the proposed new section 9 is to avoid the appearance of impropriety between the Board of Directors and the paid employees of the college/conference. If the Board of Directors found it necessary to review an employee's conduct and needed to consider the dismissal of the employee, a close relative may not be able to make an unbiased decision.

The purpose of the proposed new Section 10 is to avoid the appearance of impropriety among the members of the Board of Directors. Members of the Board of Directors who are close relatives may be perceived as a voting bloc that could pressure the decisions of the other members.

The purpose of the proposed new section 11 is to avoid the appearance of impropriety among the members of the Board of Directors. Members of the Board of Directors from the same congregation may be perceived as a voting bloc that could pressure the decisions of other members.

Proposal 2

After consideration and recommendation by the Church of God Ministerial Association at its March meeting, the Board of Directors proposes the following changes to the Statement of Faith.

BY-LAWS, ARTICLE I Statement of Faith

Proposed revision to point A. GOD

Current: We believe that only one person is God, and that He is a literal corporeal being—almighty, eternal, immortal, and the Creator of all things.

Proposed: We believe that there is only one God, the Father alone, who is almighty, eternal, immortal, and the creator of all things.

Explanation: Remove the phrase, "a literal corporeal being," because of the confusion caused by the word "corporeal." Some believe the word "corporeal" recognizes God's physical appearance in Scriptures and also allows for Him to exist as spirit. Others believe the word inhibits God's ability to appear as spirit and contradicts the Scriptures' assertion that God is also spirit. The inclusion of "corporeal" is unnecessarily divisive and does not add anything to the Statement of Faith that is fundamentally consequential.

Proposal 3

Proposed revision to point B. JESUS CHRIST

Current: "We believe that Jesus Christ, born of the virgin Mary, is the sinless and only begotten Son of God. He existed only from his birth."

Proposed: "We believe that Jesus Christ is the sinless and only begotten Son of God, who came into existence at his conception by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin Mary."

Explanation: Including "existed only from his birth" denies his existence as a person within the womb of Mary. Recognizing his existence from conception is consistent with our understanding of human life both scientifically and scripturally, since God knows us in the womb.

(Continued on page 11)

Proposed Constitution and By-Laws Amendments (cont.)

(Continued from page 10)

Proposal 4

Proposed revision to point **G. THE CHURCH OF GOD**

Current: “**G. THE CHURCH OF GOD.** We believe that the Church of God is the Scriptural name for that body of people who have been called out from among all nations through obedience to the gospel plan of salvation. Christ is the Head of the Church, and the nature, work, and government of the Church are set forth in the New Testament.

Proposed Change: “**G. THE CHURCH.** We believe that the Church is the body of people who have been called out by God from among all the nations through obedience to the gospel plan of salvation. Christ is the head of the Church, and the nature, work, and government of the Church are set forth in the New Testament.

Explanation: This change broadens the reference to the church so that it is not limited to our organization, the Church of God. It acknowledges that God is working through the church established by Jesus, rather than identifying that work exclusively with our denomination.

These proposed amendments are being published in multiple conference publications prior to the 2026 summer conference and will be voted on by the delegates August 5-7 at Cornerstone Bible Church, 180 Nail Dr., McDonough, GA.

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Why Are Constitutional Proposals Appearing in the RESTITUTION HERALD?

The Church of God General Conference Constitution and By-Laws includes the following section regarding proposed amendments. In order for an amendment to be voted on by delegates at summer conference, it must meet some requirements for publishing. This is being printed in accordance with those constitutional requirements.

ARTICLE V

Amendment of the Constitution and By-Laws

Section 1. The constitution and by-laws of the College/Conference may be amended, altered, or revised by a two-thirds majority vote of delegates present at any General Conference meeting, notice having been given of the proposed amendment or revision in at least three consecutive issues of THE RESTITUTION HERALD and/or the Progress Journal, the first appearance thereof to be at least thirty days prior to the convening of the conference by which it is to be considered. Said notice shall plainly state the nature and purpose of the amendment or revision. Publication in THE RESTITUTION HERALD and/or the Progress Journal shall be deemed sufficient notice.

Section 2. Proposed amendments to the Constitution shall be submitted in writing to the Secretary of the Board of Directors by a member church, a member conference, or the Board of Directors, in sufficient time to be properly published.

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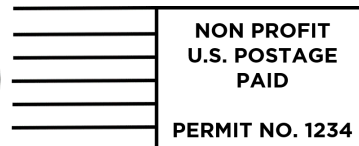
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To submit articles

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THE RESTITUTION HERALD Advocates:

- the oneness of God (1 Cor. 8:6)
- the Holy Spirit is God's power (Acts 1:8)
- Jesus Christ is God's only begotten Son (Matt. 16:16) and is our mediator (1 Tim. 2:5)
- the Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16)
- the mortality of man (Job 4:17; Psa. 146:4)
- the near return of Christ (Acts 1:11) and life only through him (Col. 3:3)
- the literal resurrection of the dead (John 5:28)
- the immortalization of those in Christ (1 Cor. 15:53-54)
- the destruction of the wicked (Rev. 21:8)
- the final restoration of Israel as the kingdom of God under the kingship of Christ (Luke 1:32)
- the church to be joint heirs with him (Rom. 8:17)
- the "restitution [restoration] of all things" (Acts 3:21).

It also firmly advocates repentance and immersion in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), and a consecrated life as essential to salvation.