

New Bethel Christian Life Commission Report – March 2007

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Quote of Month

“There are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say, we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns—the ones we don’t know we don’t know.”—Donald Rumsfeld, philosopher¹

Theologians Debate the Trinity

culled from Adelle M. Banks, *Religion News Service*,

quoted in the *Baptist Standard*, 2-5-7

Scholars have debated the Trinity for centuries, but a new twist has come to the debates, where conservatives and Classical Theologians mainly with Calvinists leanings (and others) are tying the submissiveness of women to the Trinity—all based upon how Jesus the Son is eternally submissive to the Father. The advocates claim it is crystal clear, and the critics call it bad theology. This has largely been debated in the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS), the largest and most respected society of Christian conservatives in the world (with lots SBC Seminary professors as full members and officers) their most recent meeting (2006, I believe). To be a member, one has to agree to the Trinity and authority of the Bible.

Bruce Ware, professor of Christian Theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, said, “There is a relationship of authority and submission in the very Godhead on the basis of which the other authority-submission relationships of Christ and man, and man and woman depend,” in his paper, “Equal in Essence, Distinct in Roles.”

Australian Theologian Kevin Giles disputed Ware in his paper, “The Father and the Son: Divided or Undivided Power and Authority.” Giles said, “The Father and the Son do not related to one another in exactly the same way as a man and a woman might do, and so suggest so is bad theology.” Giles noted that the suggestion that Jesus is eternally subordinate in authority denies he has the same power and essence as God and the Holy Spirit. The debate has spawned a minor controversy. The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood believes men have leadership roles in the church and home, and Christians for Biblical Equality promotes “gift-based” rather than gender-based ministry.

Mimi Haddad is president of the equality group and brought scholars together to discuss at the ETS meeting. She said, “The reformulation of the Trinity by gender hierarchicalists is utterly astounding and clearly (unorthodox) theologically.”

Wayne Grudem, founder of The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, said, “The fundamental bedrock ... principle of egalitarianism is: ‘You can’t be both equal and different. You can’t be equal in value and different in roles.’ ... That’s their deep-seated conviction, and I’m saying: ‘Yes, you can. The Trinity proves it.’”

Giles argues that the proponents of Jesus’ eternal subordination to God the Father are guilty of Arian heresy, a fourth century teaching that denied the full divinity of Christ, even denying an element of the ETS standards on the Trinity being “one in essence, equal in power and glory.” Haddad challenged Grudem’s stand as “one of the most heterodox statements I’ve ever heard. ... Members of the Trinity are coequal in power, authority, majesty and dominion.”

NEWS BREAK—They’ve Found the Tome of Jesus and His Wife!

Comments by M.G. Maness

With a new book and movie already—TV Director Simcha Jacobovici scores with a Discovery Channel Special look at “The Jesus Family Tomb.” Seems they have proof, with the names of Jesus and Mary inscribed on the tomb itself in a East Talpiot province of Jerusalem. “There, that settles it,” seems to be the essence of the case *against* the Bible’s numerous fragments of the gospels that are used as sources for our modern translations of the Bible. Not all people are convinced—surprise, surprise—the

¹ Quoted in “Essay” by Evan Eisenberg and Jeffrey Fisher, *TIME* (1-29-2007): 142.

curator for anthropology and archeology at the Rockefeller Museum in Jerusalem from 1972-1997, and the person who personally numbered the Talpoit ossuaries, Joe Zias said, “Simcha has no credibility whatsoever,” and then said, “He’s pimping off the Bible ... He got this guy Cameron, who made ‘Titanic’ or something like that—what does this guy know about archeology? I am an archeologist, but if I were to write a book about brain surgery, you would say, ‘Who is this guy?’ People want signs and wonders. Projects like these make a mockery of the archeological profession.”²

Wow—I thought that was excellent and funny. The most incredible thing, it seems to me, is that with one—count’em, ONE ossuary—the Bible then is wrong. Yet the New Testament is not based upon one source, but thousands of Greek fragments. And then there were five hundred (500) who saw Jesus raised from the dead. What more does one want?

Inspiration of Month Charles H. Spurgeon Quote Golden Ship of Heaven Moored Side by Side with Ship of Earth

From Sermon #0203, *Sympathy of the Two Worlds*, 7-4-1858, pp534-535 & 537-538, Vol. 4

“There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.” Luke 15:10

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Oh, poor, disconsolate mourner, Christ remembers thee every hour. Thy sighs are his sighs; thy groans are his groans; thy prayers are his prayers: —

“He in his measure feels afresh, What every member bears.”

Crucified he is when thou art crucified; he dies when thou diest; thou livest in him, and he lives in thee, and because he lives shalt thou live also: thou shalt rise in him, and thou shalt sit together in the heavenly places with him. Oh, never was husband nearer to his wife, and never head nearer to the members, and never soul nearer to the body of this flesh, than Christ is unto thee, and while it is so, think not that heaven and earth are divided.

They are but kindred worlds; two ships moored close to one another, and one short plank of death will enable you to step from one into the other: this ship, all black and coaly, having done the coasting trade, the dusty business of to-day, and being full of the blackness of sorrow; and that ship all golden, with its painted pennon flying, and its sail all spread, white as the down of the sea-bird, fair as the angel’s wing — I tell thee, man, the ship of heaven is moored side by side with the ship of earth, and rock though this ship may, and careen though she will on stormy winds and tempests, yet the invisible and golden ship of heaven sails by her side never sundered, never divided, always ready, in order that when the hour shall come, thou mayest leap from the black, dark ship, and step upon the golden deck of that thrice happy one in which thou shalt sail for ever.

But, O man of God, there are other golden links besides this which bind the present to the future, and time unto eternity. And what are time and eternity, after all, to the believer, but like the Siamese twins, never to be separated? This earth is heaven below, the next world is but a heaven above; it is the same house — this is the lower room, and that the upper, but the same roof cover both, and the same dew falls upon each. Remember, beloved, that *the spirits of the just made perfect* are never far from you and me if we are lovers of Jesus. All those who have passed the flood have still communion with us.



BGCT Texas Christian Life Commission, www.christianlifecommission.org & www.bgct.org, 888-332-5870 — **Baptist Joint Committee**, Washington, DC — www.bjcpa.org — **SBC Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission**, www.erc.com — **American Center for Law and Justice**, www.aclj.org - **Christian polling**: www.grassfire.org & www.ethicsdaily.com ~ **Christian Coalition** www.cc.org

Congresspersons ~ 80th Texas Session begins January 2007

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Texas Legislature www.capitol.state.tx.us - Who represents you: www.capitol.state.tx.us/fyi/fyi.htm

www.Senate.gov
www.House.gov

² Quoted from book review by Lisa Miller and Joanna Chen, *Newsweek*, 3-5-7: 61.

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