Is Jesus God?

Would God Punish America Before Other Nations?

Shrimp Vision

New DVD: Science vs. Evolution
Paul boldly claimed, “All scripture is inspired” (2 Timothy 3:16). The Greek term underlying the word “inspiration” means “God-breathed” (Vincent, 1900, 4:317). Paul was affirming a great truth. The Bible is the result of God’s out-breathing. God actually breathed out the Scriptures. The writers, the prophets, and the apostles were God-breathed men, and their writings reflect that. In 2 Peter 1:19-21, Peter alluded to the momentous occasion of Christ’s transfiguration when God literally spoke from heaven directly to Peter, James, and John (2 Peter 1:19-21). God orally breathed forth His insistence that Jesus is God’s beloved Son, and human beings were commanded to listen to Him (Matthew 17:5). Peter then declared, “We also have the prophetic word made more certain, for we speak not of ourselves, but as it was written.” Peter was saying that the Scriptures provided to us by the prophets are just as certain, and just as authoritative, as the voice of God that spoke on the mount of transfiguration. Peter further explained that the prophetic word, meaning the whole of the Old Testament Scriptures, did not originate on its own, or in the minds of those who wrote them (the meaning of “private interpretation”). Scripture did not come from “the will of men.” Scripture was not the result of human research or human investigation into the nature of things. Scripture was God-breathed. This means that the writers of the Bible were directing their utterances. It is very important to note that Peter was claiming that inspired men had their own minds engaged as they produced inspired material, but the product was Scripture, since they did not always grasp all of the significance of their own productions. This same Peter, in 2 Peter 3:18-16, referred to “our beloved brother Paul” (Warfield, 1974, 3:14-17). Where did Paul get his knowledge? He noted: “as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which those who are unlearned and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.” Peter made clear three salient points: (1) Paul wrote using Scriptures; (2) Paul’s writings are classified with “the other Scriptures,” which means that Paul’s letters are Scripture; (3) these writings are given by inspiration of God. God actually breathed them out, and we can be determined to be “inspired,” it is necessary to conceptualize the entire Old Testament as that one inspiration. The Bible literally is filled with descriptions of the essence of its own inspiration. Paul boldly claimed, “All scripture is inspired” (2 Timothy 3:16). The Greek term underlying the word “inspiration” means “God-breathed” (Vincent, 1900, 4:317). Paul was affirming that Scripture, referring primarily to the Old Testament, is the product of the breath of God. God actually breathed out the Scriptures. The Bible is God’s Word—not man’s—though He used man to produce them. Three verses later (4:2), Paul declared, “Therefore...preach...the word...” Why? Because it is God’s Word. Just as surely as God’s breath brought the Universe into existence (Psalm 33:6), so the Bible is the result of God’s out-breathing. While Peter was outlining the momentous occasion of Christ’s transfiguration, Jesus was attributing the words to God, saying that God had given His “private interpretation” of the Psalms, Isaiah, and the prophets. Scripture was “God-breathed.” There are no casual phrases, to be the authoritative Word of God (p. 1476). This attitude toward Scripture as an authoritative document is intimated by the customary formula: “It is written.” For example, when facing Satan, Jesus rebuked his attacks all three times with a simple, “It is written,” which was sufficient to establish authoritative credibility (Matthew 4:17; 10) —so much so that Satan attempted to copy Jesus in this respect (Matthew 4:6). After His resurrection, Jesus equated the entire Old Testament (i.e., the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms) with “Scripture,” and again noted “it is written” (Luke 24:44–46). He insisted very emphatically that “all food things in the Scriptures concerning Himself” must be fulfilled. Earlier in the chapter, He equated “Moses and all the prophets” with “the Scriptures” (vs. 25–27). No wonder Jesus would rebuke His religious challengers with such phrases as, “You have not read even this Scripture” (Mark 12:10; cf. Matthew 21:42); or, “You do err, not knowing the Scriptures” (Matthew 22:29); or, “if you had known what this means...” (Matthew 12:27); or, “Go and learn what this means...” (Matt. 9:13). The underlying thought in such pronouncements is that God’s truth is found in Scripture, and if you are ignorant of the Scriptures, you are susceptible to error. Jesus therefore was affirming that God is the Author of Scripture. Even the words of Scripture that do not constitute direct quotes of deity are, in fact, the words of God. For example, Jesus assigned the words of Genesis 2:24 to God as the author (Matthew 19:4–6). Yet, in the original setting of Genesis 2:24, no indication is given that God was the speaker. Rather, the words are simply narratorial comment written down by the human author—Moses. By Jesus attributing the words to God, God is affirming that the entire Old Testament of Scripture was authored by God. That means that even the words of Satan, or the words of evil people, are the words of God—in the sense that God has given us an accurate report of what those people said.
Paul treated the matter in the same way (1 Corinthians 6:16).

Over and over again, the apostles and writers of the New Testament did the same thing that Jesus did, i.e., they referred to Scripture in such a way that they considered it to be the authoritative, inspired words of God (e.g., Acts 8:35; 17:14; 28:22; Romans 12:19; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; 1 Peter 1:22). Perhaps Luke well summarized the prevailing mindset of the Bible writers: “[T]hey received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, to find out whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11). In other words, what Scripture says, God says.

Additional evidence of the Bible’s own view of itself is manifested in statements like, “For the Scripture speaks to Pharaoh...” (Romans 9:17), and “And the Scripture...preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand” (Galatians 3:8). But Scripture did not need the Holy Spirit to speak to them; they did not preach the Gospel to Abraham. Rather, God did! So the word of Scripture is the word of God! The inhabiting writer of the New Testament considered “God” and “Scripture” to be so closely linked that they could naturally speak of “Scripture” doing what Scripture records God as doing (Warfield, 3:14).

It works the other way as well. God is said to say certain things that are, in their original setting, merely words of Scripture. For example, Hebrews 3:7 reads, “Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says,” and Psalm 95:7 is then quoted. In Acts 4:25, God is said to have spoken, by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of David, the words of Psalm 2:1. In Acts 13:34-35, God is represented as having stated the words of Isaiah 55:3 and Psalm 16:10. Yet, in both of these cases, the words attributed to God in their original setting, specifically His words, but merely the words of Scripture itself.

So the writers of the New Testament sometimes referred to the Scriptures as if they were God, and they sometimes referred to God as if He were Scripture. The Bible thus presents itself as the very words of God.

In Hebrews 1:5-13, we have a list of seven Old Testament passages: Psalm 2:7; 2 Samuel 7:14; Deuteronomy 32:43; Psalm 104:4; Psalm 45:6-7; Psalm 102:25-27; and Psalm 110:1. The Hebrews writer attributed each of these passages to God as the speaker. Yet in their original setting in the Old Testament, sometimes God is the speaker, while sometimes He is not the same speaker, and in fact, being spoken to or spoken about. Why would the writer of Hebrews indiscriminately assign all of these passages to God? Because they all have in common the fact that they are the words of Scripture, and, as such, are the words of God.

The same is true with Romans 15:9-12 where Paul quoted from Psalm 102:25-27; and Psalm 110:1; and Isaiah 11:10. The first one he introduced with the formula “as it is written”; the second one is introduced by “again he says”; the third is “not against” again; and the fourth is prefaced with “Isaiah says.” Yet, in the Old Testament setting, only in the Isaiah passage is specifically God talking— and Paul assigns those words to Isaiah. So “it is written,” “he says,” and “Isaiah says,” are all different ways of saying the same thing, i.e., “God says!” Sometimes the New Testament writers assign Scripture to its human authors. Yet it is clear that when the writers said, “Moses said,” or “David said,” such was simply another way to say, “Scripture says,” which was just as much the same thing as saying “God says.”

VERBAL INSPIRATION

NOTICE that the inspiration of the Bible itself is “verbal” inspiration, i.e., God’s superintendence extends even to the words of the writer. Paul based his argument on a plural noun, and insisted that God intended the word to be understood in its singular sense (Galatians 3:16). As noted previously, Jesus based an argument on a plural noun in John 10:34. He based His point on a particular word in Matthew 22:43, on a particular tense in Matthew 22:32, and on capital letters used to stress words in Matthew 5:17-18. In the latter passage, Jesus said that Exodus 3:6 was spoken to the Scribes with whom He was conversing—even though the original context of Exodus 3:6 has God speaking to Moses. That proves that Jesus expects all people on Earth to understand that the Bible is written to every, “These things are not in man’s being, and that Scripture is intended to be authoritative for human living. Paul also affirmed verbal inspiration in 1 Corinthians 4:6. He claimed that his speech and his preaching were “not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches” (vs. 13). So inspiration involves the very words, and that makes it verbal inspiration.

NEW TESTAMENT INSPIRATION

MOST of the passages examined thus far are New Testament references to the inspiration of the Old Testament. Liberal scholars have claimed that the New Testament does not make the claim of inspiration for itself. That claim is not true. As Jesus said, “Scripture says,” and Paul classified Paul’s epistles as “Scripture,” and he affirmed that Paul’s writings carry such divine authority that those who twist them will be destroyed. It also was noted that Peter linked the apostles with the Old Testament prophets (1 Peter 1:10-12). And, as just seen, Paul made a comparable claim in 1 Corinthians 4:6.

As one reads the New Testament, it is clear that the writers made the extension of Old Testament inspiration to their own writings. They felt free to make themselves—themselves—the ministers of the new covenant (Warfield, 3:1482). Jesus, without question, declared the inspiring inspiration of the authors of the New Testament. In Matthew 10:17-20, and the parallels in Mark 13:11 and Luke 12:12, Jesus explained to the apostles that the Holy Spirit would direct their verbal activities in terms of both how and what they spoke. He reiterated the same message to Peter and stated, “They will not be able to deceive them not to worry how to defend themselves when hauled before the authorities, since He would provide them with a mouth and wisdom that their adversaries would not be able to withstand. So Jesus pre-authenticated the teaching of the apostles, and insured respect for their authority (Acts 4:9).”

Jesus directed several promises to the apostles in John chapters 14, 15, and 16. Allusion to just one of these will suffice, Jesus promised the apostles: “I still have many things to say and to teach you” (John 16:12-13). Just prior to His ascension, Jesus promised to the apostles that the Holy Spirit will be Christ’s witness (John 15:26). This is why Paul said that the extension of Old Testament inspiration to the New Testament is “dictation.” Rather, the Bible indicates that God adapted His inspiring activity to the individual temperament, vocabulary, educational level, and stylistic idiosyncrasies of each writer. The Bible is “infallible” in that it is incapable of deceiving or misleading, and is therefore completely trustworthy and reliable. “Plenary inspiration means that inspiration extends to all of its parts. Thus the Bible is fully inspired.”

The Bible is also “inerrant,” that is, it is free of error. God used human beings to write the Bible, and in so doing, allowed them to leave their mark upon it, but without making any of the mistakes that human writings are prone to make. God made certain that the words produced by the human writers were free from the errors and mistakes characteristic of uninspired writers. This influence even extended to matters of science, geography, and history. Proof for the inspiration of the Bible is a separate and necessary inquiry. However, it is important to understand what the Bible means when it claims for itself “inspiration.”

REFERENCES


CONCLUSION

The unbiased individual can easily see that the Bible claims for itself the status of “inspiration,” having been breathed out by God Himself. That inspiration entailed such superintendence by God that even the words came under His influence. Thus the Bible is “verbally inspired,” having been breathed out by God. It implies that the writers merely took “dictation.” Rather, the Bible indicates that God adapted His inspiring activity to the individual temperament, vocabulary, educational level, and stylistic idiosyncrasies of each writer.
Is evolution scientific? Do the laws of science support naturalism or contradict it? Do the commonly cited evidences for Darwinian evolution actually prove it to be true? If the evidence doesn’t support atheistic evolution, why do so many believe in it? Join a credentialed scientist as he explores the answers to these questions in this eight-session series.

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In the very first verse of John, the apostle testified: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (emp. added; cf. 1:14, 17).

Two verses later, the reader learns that “[a]ll things came into being by Him [the Word], and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being” (John 1:3, NASB).

Still in the first chapter of John, the apostle testified that John the Baptist was the one whom Isaiah foretold would “prepare... the way of Jehovah” (Isaiah 40:3; John 1:23; cf. 14:6). For whom did John the Baptist come to prepare the way? Isaiah called Him “Jehovah.” The apostle John, as well as John the Baptist, referred to Jehovah as “Jesus” (John 1:17), “the Christ” (3:28), “the Word” (1:1), “the Lamb” (1:29), “the Truth” (5:33), etc.

When the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well told Jesus, “I know that Messiah is coming” (John 4:25), Jesus responded, “Who speak to you an ‘He’” (vs. 26). Isaiah foretold that the Messiah would be called “Mighty God” (9:6) and “Jehovah” (40:3). Thus, by claiming to be the Messiah, Jesus was claiming to be God.

In John chapter nine, Jesus miraculously healed a man with congenital blindness (vs. 1). When this man appeared before various Jews in the synagogue and called Jesus a prophet (vs. 17), he was instructed to give testimony concerning Jesus, because allegedly Jesus “is a sinner” (vs. 24). Later, after the man born blind was cast out of the synagogue, he confessed faith in Jesus and worshiped (Greek proskunei) Him (vs. 38). In the Gospel of John, this word (proskunei) is found 11 times: nine times in reference to worshiping the Father (John 4:24), once in reference to Greeks who came to “worship” in Jerusalem during Passover (12:20), and once in reference to the worship Jesus received from a man whom He had miraculously healed, and who had just confessed faith in Jesus. Indeed, by accepting worship Jesus acknowledged His deity (cf. Matthew 4:10; Hebrews 1:6).

While at the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, Jesus said: “I and My Father are one” (John 10:30). “Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him” (vs. 31). Why did Jesus’ enemies want to stone Him? The Jews said to Christ: “For a good work we do not stone you, but for blaspheming, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God” (vs. 33, emp. added; cf. 5:17-18).

After Jesus rose from the dead, the apostle Thomas called Jesus “My Lord and my God” (John 20:28). Jesus responded: “Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed” (vs. 29). This verse does not deny His deity, rather He acknowledged Thomas’ faith and commended future believers. Believers in what? In that which Thomas had just confessed—that Jesus is Lord and God. It was this aspect of John’s gospel account, which is filled with statements testifying of Jesus’ deity, that the apostle recorded Jesus’ prayer to His Father the night of His betrayal (John 17). But how can Jesus’ statement about His Father being “the only true God” (17:3) be harmonized with statements by Jesus, the apostle John, John the Baptist, Thomas, etc. affirming the deity of Christ? When a person understands that Jesus’ statement was made in opposition to the world’s false gods, and not Himself, the reference to the Father being “the only true God” harmonizes perfectly with many of the scriptures that attest to the deity of Christ (including those outside of the book of John; cf. Matthew 1:23; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 1:5-13). On the eve of Jesus’ crucifixion, it was completely natural for Him to pray that “all flesh/people” (John 17:2; NKJV/NIV), many of whom were (and still are) pagan idolaters, would come to know “the only true God” and receive eternal life (17:3). Thus, Jesus contrasted Himself not from the Father, but “with all forms of pagan polytheism, mystic pantheism, and philosophic naturalism” (Jamieson, et al., 1997).

Furthermore, if Jesus’ reference to the Father being “the only true God” somehow excludes Jesus from being deity, then (to be consistent) Jesus also must be disqualified from being man’s Savior. Jehovah said: “Besides me there is no savior” (Isaiah 43:11; cf. Hosea 13:4; Jude 25). Yet, Paul and Peter referred to Jesus being “Savior” several times in their inspired writings (Ephesians 5:23; Philippians 3:20; 2 Timothy 1:10; 2 Peter 1:1.11; 2:20; etc.). Also, if Jesus is excluded from Godhood (based on a misinterpretation of John 1:1-3) then how can God the Father be excluded from being man’s Lord? To the church at Ephesus, Paul wrote that there is “one Lord” (4:4, emp. added), and, according to Jude 4 (using Jehovah’s Witnesses own New World Translation) “our only Owner and Lord” is “Jesus Christ” (emp. added). Yet, in addition to Jesus being called Lord throughout the New Testament, so is God the Father (Matthew 1:11-15; Luke 1:32; Acts 1:25) and the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:17).

Obviously, when the Bible reveals that there is only one God, one Savior, one Lord, one Creator (Isaiah 44:24; John 1:3, etc.), reason and revelation demand that we understand the inspired writer to be excluding everyone and everything—other than the triune God. As former Jehovah’s Witness David Reed explained: “Jesus’ being called our ‘only’ Lord does not rule out the Lordship of the Father and the Holy Spirit, and the Father’s being called the ‘only’ true God does not exclude the Son and the Holy Spirit from deity” (1986, p. 82).

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After World War II, sinister efforts to destroy a person more righteously than he (1:3).

The divine response perplexed the prophet, causing him to make a second inquiry: “Why do you look on those who deal treacherously, and hold Your tongue when the wicked devours a person more righteously than he?” (1:3). In other words, yes, Israel deserved punishment, but why inflict that punishment on a nation even more wicked than Israel’s polytheistic, pagan nations? God’s answer was that, in His own good time, He would ultimately deal with the more wicked nation as well.

What is unique about America is the fact that it was borne amid an almost unanimous desire to possess the favor of the God of the Bible in the establishment of the Republic. The Founders repeatedly expressed their concern that Christianity (what they repeatedly styled “true religion”) be maintained among the citizenry in order to retain divine assistance (Miller, 2010). This basic orientation was sustained as a national attitude for over 150 years. After World War II, sinister efforts were well underway to strip God and Christianity from civil, judicial, and educational institutions (Miller, 2008). Unlike Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist, and polytheistic, pagan countries— which do not claim to be “Christian”— America has been recognized over a 200-year period as a “Christian nation.” We have been blessed accordingly—beyond all other nations in human history. America’s origins so positioned her among the nations of the Earth that, in effect, many would see God’s reputation as “on the line.” Do we think He would allow America to jettison Christian values, blunt moral degeneration, and defiantly boast to the world that America is “tolerant” of perversion and immorality—without causing her to accounts for the world? As prominent Founder George Mason, often called “The Father of the Bill of Rights,” stated at the Constitutional Convention: “As nations cannot be rewarded or punished in the next world, so they must be in this. By an inevitable chain of causes and effects, Providence punishes national sins by national calamities” (as quoted in Madison, 1840, 3:1391, emp. added; of course, God’s timetable varies from human expectation, so any future retribution is unpredictable as to timing). The Founders understood this principle emphatically. Take, for example, a famous Founding Father John Witherspoon. Serving as President of Princeton from 1768 to 1776, Witherspoon was present on both the Provincial Congress of New Jersey as well as the Continental Congress (1776-1783) where he signed the Declaration of Independence. After the Revolutionary War, he was a member of the New Jersey State Assembly as well as a member of the State ratification convention for the federal Constitution. In a treatise titled “The Dominion of Providence over the Passions of Men,” written the same year the Founders declared their independence, this quintessential Founder insightfully observed: It is the prerogative of God to do what he will with his own, but he often displays his justice itself, by throwing into the furnace those, who, though they may not be visibly worse than others, may yet have more to answer for, as having been favoured with more distinguished privileges, both civil and sacred (1776, emp. added). America has been blessed with so many more privileges and blessings than other nations. But our moral decline seems to be proportional to those blessings. America has a lot to answer for. It’s only a question of time— unless a massive, nationwide, spiritual awakening is forthcoming. That is precisely what America most desperately needs—not a stronger economy, not more handouts, and not more concern for the environment. She needs to repent and fall back before the God of Heaven and beg His forgiveness.

Now do not be stiff-necked, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves to the LORD; and enter His sanctuary, which He has consecrated for ever, and serve the LORD your God, that the fierceness of His wrath may turn away from you; 2 Chronic (2:18). Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him (Psalm 2:12).

But the LORD is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth will tremble, and the nations will not be able to endure His indignation (Jeremiah 10:10).

Humans have amazing eyesight. In fact, many camera companies have looked to the eye in an effort to glean useful information in developing better photographic and video technology. As effective as the human eye is, however, there are certain things it cannot do. One of those is to detect ultraviolet light. But researchers have recently discovered with the amazing ability to detect ultraviolet light—the mantis shrimp.

Mantis shrimp are some of the most interesting creatures in the water. They have extremely powerful claws and lightening fast reflexes. But their ability to see ultraviolet light makes their eyesight one of the most remarkable abilities in the animal kingdom. Michael Bok, one of the researchers studying mantis shrimp vision stated: “The overall construction of the mantis shrimp’s visual system is just so unbelievably ridiculous, so this is just another piece of that tapestry” (Pappas, 2014). What makes their vision “unbelievably ridiculous” is that they have 12 photoreceptors in their eyes, while humans only have three (2014). Another interesting element to their vision is that the shrimp uses amino acids that act as sunscreen in their eyes to help them see ultraviolet light. The design behind mantis shrimp vision, according to those doing the work on it, is “unbelievably ridiculous,” meaning of course that is so advanced that it takes a team of researchers just to try to understand it, much less figure out a way to copy the technology. Those who contend that the mantis shrimp is a product of evolutionary changes that have taken place over millions of years cannot explain how such advanced capabilities could reside in the shrimp. No amount of mindless tinkering could produce such highly sensitive instruments as mantis shrimp eyes.

The most reasonable explanation for mantis shrimp vision is that an intelligent Creator, Who sees all things (including ultraviolet light), designed the shrimp and its complex eye. When brilliant human researchers come away from such “technology” in awe of the abilities of mantis shrimp vision, the obvious conclusion to draw is that the Designer of such vision possesses an intelligence far superior to that of the humans involved in the research.

When the Proverbs writer stated: “The hearing ear and the seeing eye, the Lord has made both of them” (Proverbs 20:12), that would certainly include a “seeing eye” that uses amino acids as sunscreen and 12 photoreceptors to see light that humans cannot.

REFERENCES


Speaking Schedules

Kyle Butt
September 18-20 Orlando, FL (407) 620-7510
September 21-22 Decatur County, TN (931) 484-5297
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September 26-28 Crossville, TN (931) 484-5297

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The Editor

New DVD: *Science vs. Evolution*

Apologetics Press continually strives to generate products that promote the cause of Christ and refute the ploys of Satan to subvert souls. Atheistic evolution has certainly been a prominent myth by which many have been drawn away from the Almighty. From its inception, A.P. has waged aggressive warfare with the forces of evolution in an effort to demonstrate its unscientific nature in contrast with the perfectly plausible biblical account of Creation. To that end, we are very pleased to announce the release of a new DVD that we believe provides tremendous assistance in ascertaining the truth about evolution.

Resident A.P. scientist Dr. Jeff Miller (Ph.D. from Auburn University) explores the laws of science, comparing them to the claims of naturalistic evolution. He meticulously examines the alleged “evidences” for Darwinian evolution. He even answers the question: “If the evidence doesn’t support atheistic evolution, why do so many believe in it?” This two-DVD set contains eight 35 minute sessions with the following titles:

- Session I: What is Evolution, and Why Does it Matter?
- Session II: Can Evolution Get Something from Nothing?
- Session III: Did the Universe Cause Itself?
- Session IV: Can Life Come from Non-life...and Turn into You?
- Session V: Do Science Textbooks Prove Evolution?
- Session VI: Do Fossils Prove Evolution?
- Session VII: Do Dating Techniques Prove the Earth is Old?
- Session VIII: Why Be an Evolutionist?

You will want to secure your copy, as well as copies for youth and others in your acquaintance who need to be equipped with this information.

**On another note:** the 2014 A.P. Christian Evidences Summer Camp is now history. Over 200 campers were blessed by this outstanding event. See the report in the centerspread of this issue of *R&R*. You may want to make your plans to be a part of the 2015 camp which will center on the theme: The Deity of Christ.

Dave Miller

See the Center Spread for More Details