

The Remnant

*“Even so then at this
present time also there
is a remnant according to
the election of grace.”
Romans 11.5*

May-June, 1999

Volume 13, No. 3

MOSES: A LIFE OF FAITH

Part 2

By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them (Hebrews 11.24-28).

In a previous article a general description was given of the events leading up to, and encompassing, the departure of Moses from the courts of Egypt. Paramount in all that transpired was the evidence Moses had received faith as a gift from God. Moses, though living centuries ago, received his faith in exactly the same fashion all the rest of the family of God receive it; it was a fruit of the Spirit.

We seek now to examine how that faith moved Moses.

THE PLEASURES OF SIN

“Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.” The choice of Moses to suffer affliction was covered previously. Now notice, at the outset,

affliction is singular but the *pleasures* are plural. Afflictions “with the people of God” are always an abiding way of life, while sin’s pleasures are transitory, elusive, and usually, seasonal. May our Lord enable us to see that whatever relation we endure with His people, it is vastly preferable to the fleeting sensations derived from sin. That includes any and all sin.

Like a stupefying drug, sin, as a sweet morsel, is lusted after, then embraced in the mind prior to the actual deed. Example: “And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be *desired* to make one wise...(Genesis 3.6).” Eve was exhilarated with the prospects of indulging in her desires prior to actually partaking of the tree. The chase (desire) is everything. The unholy *anticipation*, combining lustful desirous moments that lead to committing sin far surpass in stimulation and pleasure the foul action, for with the *act* of sinning comes condemnation. A reminder; if there is no condemnation in sinning, beware!

The subject of sin! Not simply sin, but “My sins! My sins!” Have those words pierced your conscience at some time? Job said “I have sinned (Job 7.20).” David said “I have sinned against the Lord (II Samuel 12.13).” Peter lamented “...Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord (Luke 5.8).” Paul confesses “...Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief (I Timothy 1.15).” Words cannot paint pictures suitable to portray sin in its awful ramifications or its consequences.

The Remnant

published
6 times annually
by
Saints Rest Primitive Baptist Church
of Dallas, Texas

The Remnant Publications

In the interest of
The Old Order of Baptists

Elder C. C. Morris
Editor and Publisher
P O Box 1004
Hawkins, Texas 75765
Phone 1-903-769-4822

The Remnant is sent free of any obligation
to all interested persons.

Address all correspondence to:

THE REMNANT PUBLICATIONS
P O BOX 1004
HAWKINS, TX 75765-1004

E-mail: cc2morris@aol.com
ccmorris@juno.com
Web site: www.the-remnant.com

Phone 1-903-769-4822

Neither would it satisfy our current study if all the texts in the Bible describing sin were called to remembrance. Thus, only a few various texts will be offered. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin (Romans 14.23)." "The thought of foolishness is sin (Proverbs 24.9)." "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law (I John 3.4)." These, and a multitude more, might be drawn from to give some faint idea of sin. It may fairly be said, sin is the corruption that fills the void where there is no faith (Romans 14.23); it is the meanderings of corrupt minds left unfettered by the Spirit (Proverbs 24.9); sin is the workings of the creature, at his best estate, when fettered by the law (I John 3.4).

An examination of sin from the perspective of Moses' faith will be helpful. Beginning at the outset—Moses attained no perfection by refusing to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Nor was his sinful nature lessened by *choosing rather* to suffer affliction with the people of God. What transpired with Moses is what, to some degree or another, takes place in every heaven-born child of God. Moses found he was repulsed by his own sinfulness and would, if possible, flee from all sin forevermore. How so, it may be asked? Here is how: when Moses turned from the pleasures of sin it was an *inward reaction* resulting from an *inward renewing*. Viewing the dramatic change in the affections of Moses, it would be a serious mistake to fail to recognize the quickening work of the Spirit in him. Moses was renewed! Surely there could have been nothing else to move a man to act in so bold a manner. What Moses did was, in man's eyes, tantamount to rude disrespect to his adoptive mother; treason to the court and Pharaoh the king; folly of the highest order and totally wrong. What else could possibly have been the reason? He was driven by a renewed heart to lay aside the splendor, magnificence, power, and attending pleasures of the courts of Egypt. He abandoned all, everything, for a life of affliction, and that with the subjected tribes, these Israelite slaves he claimed as his people.

Suffer on one hand or enjoy a sumptuous fare on the other? That was a panorama of the future as Moses surveyed it. To stay among his adoption family would assure a continuity of enjoyments unparalleled in the world at the time, and would rival the splendor of any period of time. To go and join with his brethren meant there would be squalor, pain, desperation, and abandonment; what more need be said? The impending circumstances Moses faced in refusing his current status was bleak indeed; yes, worse than bleak. Moses had never known such wretchedness as he chose to suffer. His awareness of the Israelites' plight could not prepare him for what was coming. He was consenting to exchange the royal robes for tatters; and to borrow a thought from the Puritan, Brown, "Moses dared to exchange his golden bracelets for manacles; the studded neckwear for chains." (Moses did not know the perfect plan of God at the time. That would come at the burning bush.)

The court perfume would give way to the putrid smells of toil. Rather than the warm embrace of princely contemporaries there would be the whip, the curses, and abuses of the taskmasters. This was what faith led Moses to choose! As far as sight was concerned there were various choices, and all better than what Moses contemplated. But—with faith leading Moses' mind—there was no other course. Only faith could look beyond the degradation of Jacob's children and witness the blessed benefits of suffering affliction; afflictions with the people of God rather than the pleasures of sin for a season.

Mark well! The alternative to leaving Pharaoh's graces was the same as choosing the temporary *pleasures of sin*. The word of God calls this temporary stay a *season*. Faith, however, views the grace of God infinitely better than the graces of any earthly potentate.

“The pleasures of sin for a season.” “To every thing there is a season... (Ecclesiastes 3.1).” The season of Moses' residency in Egypt was coming to a close. A new season was dawning. “A time to get and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away (Ecclesiastes 3.6).” Moses was to become both a loser and a keeper. His losses, however, would actually be his gain. Gone would be his servitude to a lie, being what he was not. Gone would be the transparent joys of the monstrous regime of wicked Pharaoh. Gone would be love for a world soon to be dead to him. The season of these transient things was suddenly passing. A new season, an eternal season was dawning with the rising of the Son of Righteousness in the soul of Moses, and that by faith.

What Moses experienced by faith is nothing, more or less, than what the prophets and the apostles told us would occur. “The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord (Proverbs 16.1).” Surely God prepared the heart of Moses when He imparted faith as a gift to him. The ground was broken up and the seed of faith planted. The fruit of this planting was the answer of the tongue. Moses declared, both by word and deed, that he was not the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Concurrent to his declaration he chose “rather” to walk the path of afflictions with the dear troubled saints. He could tarry no longer in the courts of Egypt. To have done so would have been sin, larded with its awful consequences.

Witness how closely the life of Moses parallels the words of Jeremiah: “O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps (Jeremiah 10.23).” Moses, Jeremiah, Paul, or us today; none of us have power to direct our steps.

Consider the way Moses first came to the courts of Egypt. He had absolutely nothing to do with his being there. Neither did his parents. By faith, not by wisdom, they placed Moses in the little ark, and launched him into the currents of the river. The hand of God alone directed the currents, their flow, and the entire river of water. (See Proverbs 21.1.) Where to and how far Moses would sojourn in the Nile was known only to the Lord. It was not in Moses to get *into* the family of Pharaoh and it was not in him to get *out*. Moses had no more power or wisdom to direct his steps out of the regal palace than an Egyptian grasshopper possessed to build a pyramid. Moses could no more walk out of the courts of Egypt than he could walk in. *It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps*. Moses was at that time, much as David was later, when he pleaded, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting (Psalm 139.23, 24).” Yes, Lord, lead me in the way everlasting. The way of Egypt was temporal. The pleasures of Egypt were but seasonal sins. Moses, being a child of faith, must now follow the paths faith opened for him. Thus, Moses, by faith, being led in the way, walking in the paths of the Lord's choosing, was actually passive. At the time of the original creation, when God said, “Let there be light,” all was passive, answering only the voice of God. So too Moses. Moses chose. Moses refused. But God directed his steps, put the words (answer) in his mouth as sure as there is a heaven. The lot may have been cast by Moses but the disposing was *of the Lord*. Faith was victorious. The pleasures of sin would be abandoned.

THE REPROACH OF CHRIST.

“Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.” Moses had refused, and Moses had chosen. Now Moses is engaged in *esteeming*. He esteemed! On what was it that Moses

placed his esteem? The reproach of Christ; the blessed reproach of Christ! "What is this Moses? Would you esteem loss and deprivation, suffering and shame, hatred and scorn, above and before the embellishments that have been yours for a lifetime, and are secured to you till your end? Moses! Moses! Stop your madness and consider what you are giving up. Do not be a fool." Is this the language of a blind world or not? Sadly, it is. Many of us have heard similar from those our loved ones and friends when the Lord fixed our gaze on things above.

Generally, reproach is thought to be a reviling or upbraiding. This appears to be the way the word is intended here. Consequently, in the estimation of Moses, it would be preferable, vastly preferable, to be reviled and castigated for the dear Name of his Saviour than to revel in the wealth of Egypt's coffers.

Readers, no poor sinner, unaided by the Spirit, and without faith, can evaluate the seeming options and come to the conclusion Moses came to. Splendor, ease, comforts and luxurious appointments to satiate the wildest lusts cannot be discarded, nor soon abandoned by our carnal natures. There must be a cause. (There *are* those that choose the austere life for carnal reasons or from pure miserliness. This cannot be denied.)

Moses had a cause. The best of all causes. He had not always had it. It was a gift from God. His cause was faith; the faith of God's elect. It was the faith that had moved Noah, Abraham and Sara, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph before him, along with untold hosts of others. Now, in the passing of time, Moses came to years. God called him out by the voice of the Son of God, implanting faith within and stirring him to action. Be not deceived; Moses was *then as good as gone* from the courts of Egypt when God laid His hand on him. All that was left was the actual event coming to pass.

The just shall live by faith. Just so did just Moses. With faith exercising his faculties, Moses surveyed the circumstances. Values were considered. Conclusions were reached. The darling of Pharaoh's daughter was at his Rubicon. On the one hand was power, opulence, grandeur and ease. On the other hand was degradation, misery and distress. But these were all earthly values; values that were to perish with passing time. Moses, by faith, looked beyond

these temporal things and viewed the grander prize. He would press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus.

Doubt not that Moses knew what he was getting into. He did not estimate the riches of Christ greater riches. No! He estimated the *reproach* of Christ greater riches. Moses had the eye of a businessman. Not an earthly businessman but a spiritual businessman. Nor did Moses look over the scene with the limitations of the natural eye. It was the eye of faith which perceived the options.

REPROACHES

No study of the word *reproach* could be deemed thorough unless the lamentations of David on reproach were examined. "But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people (Psalm 22.6)." David's words were the prophetic grief of Christ, as evidenced elsewhere in this psalm. How lowly the opinion our Lord assumed for Himself; a worm; no man. A *reproach* of men! Despised! We probably cannot know if the Lord fully accepted these expressions or not but it is clear that he did not reject them. We learn elsewhere from Scriptures that these things were all necessary. In a passage in complete harmony with our subject we are afforded more light on the reproached Saviour. "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not (Isaiah 53.3)." This must be taken as the collective estimation of Israel concerning Christ before the light of life had been implanted in any of their souls. Centuries earlier, Moses had the very opposite view of Christ. So lovely, and so worthy was Christ, Moses could, and did esteem the worst physical benefits accruing from union with the Lord to be preferable to all the accumulated treasures of Egypt or the fulfilling of the wildest passions man could imagine to indulge in. The reproach of Christ was not just preferable to the treasures of Egypt; it was *greater*! This worm, Jesus; this despised man of sorrows, afforded Moses a luxury unknown in all the halls of Pharaoh's courts. The priests of Egypt could not provide it. Fame nor possessions afforded Moses what the reproach of Christ did. Moses could now, by faith, esteem this reproach of Christ with proper and complete esteem.

There must be no mistaking what is spoken of here. This is not a reproach that Moses would experience as a result of leaving the palace of Pharaoh and denouncing his adoptive name. That reproach would only be a by-product of the reproach of Christ. What Moses esteemed was that worthy and inestimable cost our Lord paid by descending heaven's glories and majesty to be robed in the likeness of sinful flesh. Jesus suffered humility, indignity, disgrace, revilings, abuse, aspersions of every variety; this and more. It was so that Moses and all other called children of God might be blessed to properly esteem the sacrifice of all His dignity and resplendence.

"Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach (Hebrews 13.13)." Joy of joys! We, the sojourners and pilgrims, in search of a city have the directive to join our dear redeemer at a point outside the camp. As we go, we are clothed in His reproach. Can a sweeter journey be imagined? To travel in the garments of our Lord's reproach is a rich mercy indeed. May we be hastened by the anticipation of both the journey and the attainment.

The camp may well be understood as a reference to the incident in the life of Moses when he pitched the tabernacle without the camp after the Israelites were provided a golden calf by Aaron (Exodus 33.7). It will be remembered that Aaron had made the people naked unto their shame and many were slain at the time. "And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men (Exodus 32.28)." This appears to characterize the difference between those that are clothed in the shame of a crucified Lord and those that are clothed in their own shame and nakedness. In summary, this probably is the reproach that aroused such esteem in the heart of Moses.

"For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me (Romans 15.3)." This verse was taken by Paul directly from Psalm 69, which could well be described as a Psalm of Christ's reproach. An introduction to that vein of thought is discovered in verse 7. "Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face." Hear the Saviour speak by way of prophecy. "For *thy* sake!" For the Father's sake; that is why he had borne re-

proach and why shame clothed His countenance. Then comes the text quoted by the apostle: "For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me (Verse 9)." Whatever can the Psalmist and the apostle mean by this? Just this: God the Father has been reproached (defamed, railed at, chided, taunted, reviled, upbraided) by mankind. Abuse had been heaped up at God in the multitudinous sins of the people. Indignities towards the holiness of God gathered like a lowering cloud. God's justice would demand exactness and retribution. Man, wicked man, must either find reconciliation or the debt would be called due.

It is at this point that we see the glories of a suffering substitute. A kinsman redeemer would intervene and make good all the debt incurred by certain ones (His elect). Yes, Jesus bowed His holy head and accepted the weight of all the reproaches that man had defiantly reproached the Father with. It was as if Jesus had said, "Father, I will bear your reproach. Lay their sins of reproaching on me. I will assume all responsibility and pay in full any grievances that may have accumulated by their wickedness." "Yes, let the reproaches of them, my sons and brethren, that reproached thee, Father, be my reproaches. I will assume them all!

The awful burden of these reproaches cannot be underestimated. "Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness (Psalm 69.20)." This, reader, is the reproach that Moses esteemed greater riches than the treasures in Egypt. Can you see its worth?

Moses, by faith did see just that. Centuries before any of the suffering and reproach was ever felt by our redeemer, Moses esteemed its intrinsic excellence. Moses esteemed it highly and for its value gave up, forsook, all. Was he a fanatic? Was he deranged? Never! Moses was never more sane. In fact, he had only just then come to his senses. Prior to this Moses was as spiritually deranged as any other of Adam's fallen posterity.

The remainder of the account of Moses will be taken up in a final article, the Lord willing.

—Elder James F Poole
30233 Mallard Drive
Delmar MD 21802-1250

JEHOVAH SPEAKS AND JACOB LISTENS

Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb: And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you (Isaiah. 46.3-4).

There exists an infinite contrast between the eternal, sovereign, covenant-keeping God of glory and the false gods of the nations. Perhaps nowhere is this contrast shown more clearly than in chapter 46 of Isaiah. The world is full of religion and religious people. Many denominations and factions of denominations are devoted to their ideas of worship of God. The various denominations are separated to some extent because of differences of opinion regarding the nature of God, the gospel, the proper method of worship, church organization, and so on. However they may disagree over other matters, it seems that the vast majority of the religious world agrees to serve a god which falls infinitely short of the God revealed in the Bible. They, like the devotees of Bel and Nebo of old, serve a god which must be borne by them—a god which is a burden to them—instead of the true God, who bears His people from the womb through old age.

The word of the Lord to his chosen children, the remnant according to the election of grace, is, “Hearken unto me.” I am persuaded that Almighty God speaks to the hearts of His children in all nations and through all generations to “hearken unto me.” I am further persuaded that He speaks effectually. He captures their attention and draws them to hear Him over the din of religious confusion. The great division among religious people is not man-made. It is the division brought about by the voice of God, separating the true worshippers who hear His voice from the multitudes who follow the voice of strangers. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the great Shepherd of His sheep. He distinguished His sheep as those who know His voice. “... when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will

they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers (John 10.4-5).” May the God of all grace bless us to consider the contrast between the sad state of the idol worshippers and the blessedness of those who are borne of God.

Chapter 46 of Isaiah begins with these words: “Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth.” These were two highly revered “gods” of the Babylonians. Their names were incorporated into the names of Babylon’s kings: Belshazzar from Bel, and Nebuchadnezzar from Nebo. The Babylonians esteemed these gods as superior over all others, including the God of captivated Israel, Jehovah. The Babylonians mocked their captive Jews with these idols, claiming that, since Babylon had captured Jerusalem and carried the Jews off to Babylon, Jehovah God was not able to deliver His people from the mighty Bel and Nebo worshippers. “By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion (Psalm 137.1-3).”

As far as the Babylonians could see, the course of history was proving their gods and their system of worship to be true and superior. Indeed, even God’s covenant people were hard pressed to reconcile the events they witnessed and experienced with their faith in the sovereignty of Jehovah. “How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land (Psalm 137.4)?”

In our day we see that the abominations that caused the Old School Baptist brethren to take their stand in the early 1800’s have multiplied, as have the numbers of those who perpetuate them. Modern religion has abandoned all traces of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and has raised up in its place a worldly, idolatrous monument to the gods of pleasure, prosperity, and sensuality. The high priests of this system win the hearts of their devotees with a flesh-exalting mantra of psychological mumbo jumbo. The modern “houses of worship” are packed with gigantic congregations lured in and captivated by the charisma of the “preacher” and the comfortable feeling of the worldly entertainment that sets the mood. The degeneration and emptiness of what passes for reli-

gion in most circles today would shock even the most innovative of the “means” advocates of the last century. While they scoff and mock the children of Zion as the “chosen frozen,” their popularity and prosperity grow by leaps and bounds. This success inflates them to predictions of a grand and glorious future. The new religion calls the various denominations to devalue any distinctive doctrinal positions they may still hold in order to unite in the work of ushering in a new glorious day. While all this is going on “out there,” we see the diminishing of the ranks of the Old School Baptists. Our churches are few and far between. Our “old soldier” ministers and “solid citizen” members are passing on with few prospects apparent to take their places in the ranks. History seems to be putting its stamp of approval on the new system while consigning the Old School of Christ to the scrap heap of obsolescence.

Not so fast, my friends. Things are not always as they seem. “Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off (1 Kings 20.11).” The prophet Isaiah was blessed to see the “latter end” of these boastful Babylonians and their so-called gods. There was to come a “ravenous bird from the east”, whom Jehovah had already named. Cyrus, king of Persia, would overthrow Babylon and issue the decree to re-establish Jerusalem. And what of the idols, Bel and Nebo? They were to be broken and carted off to the recycling center to be melted down for some more useful service. Thus, “Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth, their idols were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle: your carriages were heavy loaden; they are a burden to the weary beast. They stoop, they bow down together; they could not deliver the burden, but themselves are gone into captivity (Isaiah 46.1,2).” Their “latter end” was worse than the beginning.

This was not an isolated incident. This is a universal principle. False idols and those who worship them—regardless of how they may seem to prosper for a season—shall all be ultimately brought down in shame and confusion; while the afflicted, poor, and maligned servants of Almighty God shall be delivered and vindicated. “Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour. They shall be ashamed, and also confounded, all of them: they shall go to confusion together that are

makers of idols. But Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end (Isaiah 45.15-17).”

“Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself....” How unlike the common opinion of the religious world is this. According to them, God is doing everything He can to make Himself known to all of Adam’s race. He is standing at the door of the sinner’s heart, meekly waiting to be invited in. The purveyors of this notion encompass sea and land to make proselytes. They buy air time on television and radio to talk about a god that loves everybody and wants to save them. They say that he has done all he can do about it and that it is up to us. Only we, with our free will, can make the eternal difference between glorious bliss and everlasting destruction. If there is any obstacle in the way of salvation, say they, it is not on God’s part.

“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them (Isaiah 8.20).” Our Lord Jesus said it this way: “I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him (Matthew 11.25-27).” Again, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day (John 6.44).”

“Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself...” Our God often “hides” Himself in His providential dealings with His people and with the nations. This is not so with the modern god. The modern god is transparent and easy to understand. The modern god is completely accessible at all times. One can get as close to this new god as one wishes. Just “name it and claim it.” According to his media ambassadors, this modern god is so much at the disposal of his worshippers that he can’t exercise parental discretion on their prayers. They say, “You had better be careful what you pray for, because you might pray down something that will be to your harm.” Ac-

ording to them, a disciple of this modern god might “demand” something which would not “work together” for his or her good. I suppose it is conceivable that one could so manipulate this god through prayer as to cause one to die “before his time.” The modern god is not mysterious or hard to understand. In fact, since he doesn’t have anything to do with any of the “bad” stuff—the evil thoughts and deeds of men, catastrophic storms and disturbances in nature, economic setbacks, chronic health problems, etc.—this modern god seems to be as perplexed as any by these things. He is not in control of these things with a wise and holy purpose in every detail—he just “feels our pain” and expects us to smile and count on him to somehow “get the best” of these bad things eventually. Away with this helpless imposter! If I have to worship one who is at the mercy of outside influences, I might as well worship myself!

William Cowper described the works of the *real* God as follows:

God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-failing skill,
He treasures up his bright designs,
And works his sovereign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan his works in vain;
God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain.
(*Cowper, #68 in Beebe Collection*)

The children of God are called to walk by faith and not by sight. This is constantly trying to the flesh. When we look at the outward appearance of things in our lives and in the world around us, God seems to be hidden. It is only when we are blessed by grace to see what is real by faith that God’s wonderful, unerring hand becomes evident. “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal (2 Corinthians 4.17,18).”

“Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob...” This is the secret. Others may try to tell us anything. We are not to take the Babylonian’s word as to who God is and how He works. We are not to listen to those who cry, “Lo, here,” and, “Lo, there.” We are not to give “heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.” We are not to get our doctrine from the reverend doctors of the theological seminaries. We are not to trust in the arm of flesh or to lean to our own understanding. We are to hearken unto the Word of God.

Almighty God has never lied to us about Himself, His works, or His will concerning His elect. We may rely on His word in all matters at all times and under all circumstances. God’s word is sufficient for us. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (2 Timothy 3.16,17).” Our Lord, whose prayer is always heard by the Father, prayed that His people would be set apart from the world by His word of truth. “I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because...They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth...And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they

also might be sanctified through the truth (John 17.14-19).” In the midst of her most trying difficulties our God has spoken to the “house of Jacob and all the remnant of the house of Israel.”

Jacob and Israel are two names for the same person. The name Jacob, which means “supplanter,” is the name Isaac’s younger son was given at birth. Israel, meaning “prince with God,” is the name the Angel of God gave him at Peniel after they wrestled all night. The name Jacob describes the children of God as they are by nature—depraved, self-centered, deceiving usurpers. The name Israel describes the blessed position of these people in Jesus Christ—“a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people (1 Peter 2.9).” When the God who hides Himself speaks, He speaks to this people. He speaks to them in their afflictions, and reminds them of His nature, His promises, His works on their behalf, and His purpose to keep them through all their trials unto the glorious, predestined end of their faith.

“Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb: And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you (Isaiah 46.3-4).”

What an incredible blessing to be named among such a nation! “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance (Psalm 33.12).” While the idol worshippers have to bear their gods, and groan under the weight of an impotent idol that can’t deliver them from the enemy, the house of Jacob and all the remnant of the house of Israel are borne by their God.

God does not begin to bear them when they call on Him, but they are “borne by me from the belly,” and “carried from the womb.” In fact, this care of God to His people goes way back beyond the womb. “He bare them, and carried them all the days of old (Isaiah 63.9).” The eternal God never changes, and neither does His tender care and support to His children. He does not bear them “until they are able to fend for themselves.” He does not get them started “in the Spirit” and let them finish “in the flesh,” but He says, “even to your old age I am he; and even to

hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.” What courage, what confidence, what boldness, what humility, what peace do these words inspire in those to whom they are spoken! Take heart, ye fearful and beleaguered saints. Hearken to the One who undertakes for you in all things. Look unto God, your refuge and strength. He who has “begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1.6).” He will “never leave thee, nor forsake thee (Hebrews 13.5).” If we are given such assurance that God is for us, has been for us, and always will be for us, then it matters not how few we seem to be or how despised our precious doctrine is by the world. We can go forward in the strength of the Lord and boldly say, “The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me (Hebrews 13.6).”

—Elder Shannon Vaughn

217 Massey Street

Morrilton, AR 72110

E-mail: svaughn714@aol.com

WHY YOUR PAPER MAY STOP COMING TO YOUR HOME

Have you moved? Has your address been changed, even slightly? If so, you may not receive your copy of THE REMNANT any longer. We are glad to send you the paper, but the Post Office will not deliver to the wrong address. They are under no obligation to deliver the paper without a proper address change, and usually they will not. IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY! We must pay fifty cents to the USPS each time you move without notifying us. If you desire to continue receiving our publication, you must notify us when your address changes. A good way to do this is to mail us a label from another magazine subscription you are receiving. The “zip +4” address helps tremendously. We are sorry when it happens, but, without your correct address, we have no other option than to drop your name from our list. Thank you for your cooperation.

AN APPROACH TO STUDYING THE BIBLE

(Continued from last issue)

Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness (2 Timothy 2.15f).

There is nothing unscriptural about *studying* the Bible, or *reading* it, if you prefer to say it that way, or *searching it daily*, to use a scriptural term. The saints are both bidden to study and commended for searching the Scriptures to see if their preacher's doctrine was "so": "These [Bereans] were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and **searched the scriptures daily**, whether those things were so (Acts 17.11, emphasis supplied)."

For those who have a hope in Christ Jesus, He alone is their meat and drink; nothing else will satisfy them. Above all else they hunger and thirst for Him and Him alone. Their cry is, "My beloved is like a roe or a young hart: behold, he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the windows, showing himself through the lattice (Song 2.9)." They wish only another glimpse of Him, if only as through a lattice.

And He is the very one who said, "Search the scriptures...they are they which testify of me." The latticework through which He is seen is no doubt composed of the various books of the Bible, intricately woven together by the Holy Spirit, using as His weaving material the doctrine of our God and of His Christ. The Holy Spirit is the only interpreter of what He has inspired, the only one who can give us a glimpse through His lattice and the one who quickens our souls in hope at the very sight of Him, if only obscurely and at a distance.

Our last installment closed on this note, **we need an overall or bird's-eye view of the Old Testament and of the Bible**, referring to seven chapters in the Bible which give "capsule histories" or summaries of large portions of the Bible. The point being made was that neither a haphazard reading of the Bible, here and there—a favorite Psalm one day, some verses in John on another day, a chapter in Isaiah or Ephesians on yet another—nor the "chapter a day" method will truly acquaint one with what the Bible is all about.

A Word about Bible Chronology

The Old Testament covers around 4,000 years, from Adam to Christ. Ussher's chronology, found in most Bibles, places the creation of Adam at 4004 BC. A perhaps more accurate study of dates, found in *The Wonders of Bible Chronology*, by Philip Mauro, places Adam's creation at 4,046 BC. Mauro's book is of immeasurable value to anyone who is interested in the time periods from Adam to Christ. If you are interested in Old Testament chronology and are able to do so, get a copy of this unique and worthwhile little book.

At any rate, in round figures, we find around four millennia between Adam and Christ, give or take a few years. Exactly halfway between Adam and Christ, 2,000 years from either, Abraham was a young man in Ur of the Chaldees.

In 1,000-year increments we have Adam, 4000 BC; Enoch, 3000 BC; Abraham, 2000 BC; and Solomon, 1000 BC.

In 500-year increments we have Adam, 4000 BC; Seth, 3500 BC; Enoch, 3000 BC; Noah, 2500 BC; Abraham, 2000 BC; Moses, 1500 BC; Solomon, 1000 BC; and Zerubbabel, 500 BC.

One would do well to copy those dates in the blank pages in the front or back of their Bible and to refer to them often. Knowing these dates will be of growing value to you in keeping the Old Testament in historic perspective. For one thing, you now know you can read half of the Old Testament's recorded history—a full 2,000 years—by reading the first 11 chapters of Genesis!

A Chapter a Day?

Consider the chapter a day approach, which many who feel a need to read their Bibles think is an entirely adequate way to do it. Let us say that on January 1, 1999, a person resolved to read the Bible through a chapter a day.

Assuming he keeps his resolution, he will finish Genesis on February 19, Deuteronomy early in June, the Old Testament in June, 2001, and complete the book of Revelation—and the Bible—in March of 2002, over three years and three months after he began. He will have just begun 1 Chronicles on January 1, 2000, he'd be in Isaiah on January 1, 2001, and in Galatians on January 1, 2002. Along about then, ask him who Zedekiah was and what he did.

Is this a realistic approach to reading the most precious book in the world, especially when many of the New Testament books are letters of only a few pages, obviously designed to be read at a single sitting? If you received a fourteen-page letter from your most beloved, or a long letter from an attorney telling you of a fortune you have inherited, would you take two weeks to read it a page a day? By the time you would have gotten well into it, you would have forgotten much of what you had already read.

Certainly, if we are serious about reading this divinely inspired book and knowing what is in it, we need a better approach than this.

A Different Approach

One such approach is to use shorter Biblical passages which summarize large portions of the Bible as a starting point from which we can branch out, gradually adding to our familiarity with the Old Testament. The words used above—*serious*, *starting point*, and *gradually*—were not chosen lightly. What follows is for those who seriously desire a long-term, growing way to become more familiar with their Bibles, especially the Old Testament. I sincerely hope and pray this describes the most of our readers.

The Seven Capsule Histories

To return, then, to the inspired capsule histories: Seven key Bible chapters (at least) cover large portions of the Old Testament. By using them as starting points, *the interested reader* can find out where lies the emphasis of the scriptures themselves.

We cannot try to give a deep commentary on these chapters herein, nor would we, because that would rob the readers of the pleasure of seeking out the details for themselves. “It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter (Proverbs 25.2).” Our comments are deliberately kept to a minimum. The seven key chapters are: (1) Nehemiah 9, (2) Psalm 78, (3) Psalm 105, (4) Psalm 106, (5) Acts 7, (6) Acts 13, and (7) Hebrews 11.

Let us consider each of these chapters as stepping stones to a better grasp of the Bible, the Old Testament more particularly. Before we begin, I strongly recommend that you get your Bible so that you can actually look up the citations and follow along.

1. In their extended prayer recorded in **Nehemiah 9:6-38**, the Levites recount Israel’s history from Genesis 1 to the then-present time, around 445 B. C., after Israel had been restored to the promised land after their captivities in Assyria and Babylon. Of the four Old Testament summaries cited herein, this one, in thirty-three verses, covers more time than any of the others: around 3,500 or more years of the Old Testament era, from the creation account in Genesis 1 to less than five hundred years before the birth of Christ. Though first in Biblical order, it was the last of these four Old Testament summaries written.

Verse 6 briefly recounts the creation in Genesis 1. Verses 7 and 8 go immediately to God’s choice of and **covenant promises** to Abraham, and the development of the families of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Genesis 11-50).

Verses 9-22 carry us through the remaining books of Moses (Exodus through Deuteronomy).

Joshua is summarized in three verses (v. 23-25) and Judges in four more (v. 26-29). The period of Israel’s kings and the prophets who prophesied up to and including the times of the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities is condensed into one verse, verse 30.

Verse 31-38 is the Levites’ concluding prayer regarding their present difficulties.

In this chapter the priests heavily emphasize the sins of Israel, the justice of Jehovah’s dealings with them, and His absolute sovereignty and grace. God’s **covenant** is mentioned twice (verses 8 and 32).

2. In **Psalm 78.1-72**, the writer covers the time from when the children of Israel were delivered from the land of Egypt under Moses’ leadership until the time of David, a period of almost 500 years. The nine books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, and 2 Samuel are divinely summarized in seventy-two verses. Surely, such concentrated food is well worth chewing and digesting.

The first eight verses are introductory. What follows as described in this Psalm literally happened, but the experience of Israel is a parable (v. 2) for the generation to come, the children which should be born (v. 6). *The generation to come* is not only the succeeding generations of national Israel; it includes the spiritual children of God, born of His Spirit, the new creation in Christ Jesus. “This shall be written

for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord (Psalm 102.18).” “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature (*creation*, margin): old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new (2 Corinthians 5.17).” Paul tells us plainly the value of the Old Testament scriptures: “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope (Romans 15.4).” See also 1 Corinthians 10.1-15.

Verse 10, “*They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law,*” sets the scene for what is to follow, and establishes the need for the New Covenant mentioned in Jeremiah 31.31-34. There the prophet says, speaking in the name of Jehovah: “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a **new covenant** with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to **the covenant** that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; **which my covenant they brake**, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: But this shall be **the covenant** that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” God’s covenant is mentioned twice in this Psalm; both times have to do with man’s not keeping its terms.

In verse 12 the psalmist begins the details of the exodus from Egypt. The field of Zoan mentioned here and in verse 43 is a good example of why a *serious reader*, desirous of understanding what is read, might want to obtain a Bible dictionary, a book of Bible geography, or both.

In verses 13-72 he covers God’s plagues upon the Egyptians, the crossing of the Red Sea, the fiery and cloudy pillar, the miraculous water from the riven rock, God’s feeding Israel with quail and the manna, the conquest of Canaan under Joshua and the subsequent dividing of the land among the tribes of Israel,

Israel’s Idolatry while in the promised land and their ensuing slavery during the time of the Judges, God’s gracious deliverances of Israel from their enemies, and His raising up David as Israel’s king.

This psalm is devastating in its condemnation of Israel in their depravity: They kept not God’s **covenant**, refused to walk in His law, forgat His works and wonders, provoked Him, spake against Him, did not believe Him or trust Him, flattered Him, lied to Him, and many like sins.

They limited the Holy One of Israel (v. 41). What an indictment of those who question God’s absolute sovereignty, and more particularly those who limit (in their own minds and in their doctrine) His absolute predestination of all things!

Much that is mentioned in the earlier verses is repeated or alluded to in later verses— for only one example, compare verse 9 with verse 57. “Ephraim, **carrying bows** [Ephraim was noted for their prowess in combat], turned back in the day of battle...turned back and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers: they were turned aside **like a deceitful bow**.” The basic definition of sin comes from an archer’s term, that of missing a mark set up as a target. Sin is a missing of the mark or target God has set up. We cannot do what we “aim” to do, and the literal history of the tribe of Ephraim is a parable of this.

Yet, as much as this psalm condemns Israel’s sins, it nevertheless sets forth the grace and mercy of the Lord (verses 38f, 44-55, 65-72). “He remembered that they were but flesh, *a wind that passeth away and cometh not again* (v. 39).” This verse is the Old Testament equivalent of John 3.8, which likens God’s children (not the Holy Spirit, as it is often misread and misapplied) to the wind.

3. In Psalm 105.1-45, David covers the period from Abraham (Genesis 11-12) to the conquest of Canaan under Joshua, around 600 years. He covers Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses, and closes with another reference to Abraham (v. 42), completing the circle. There is not one reference to the sins of God’s people in this psalm. Instead, the emphasis is on God’s **everlasting covenant**, which is mentioned three times in this Psalm (v. 8-10) together with “His holy promise (v. 42),” with the resulting salvation of His people. Again, God’s plagues upon

Israel's enemy, Egypt, are prominent (v. 24-38). His sovereignty over reprobates' hearts (a subject the free-willer, unfamiliar with such passages, will cry down as "unscriptural") is mentioned in verse 25: "He turned their heart to hate his people, to deal subtly with his servants."

If there were not another text in the Bible that refutes the reward-earning system of Arminianism and Conditionalism, verses 44-45 are sufficient to do so: God "gave them the lands of the heathen: and they inherited the labour of the people; *That they might observe his statutes, and keep his laws.* Praise ye the Lord." (Emphasis supplied.) The *that* of verse 45 is the same as *in order that*. He gave them the promised land by grace—that is, He did not give them the promised land *because of* their obedience; they did not obey Him as if they were trying to earn what God had already promised them, working *in order that* He would give them the land! Is it any wonder, then, that the Psalmist ends with a call to praise our God Jehovah?

4. Psalm 106.1-48 covers the period of around 1,000 years from Egypt to the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities. This psalm, like Psalm 78, is full of references to Israel's obstinate sin and rebellion, but it presents the Lord's gracious deliverances in marked contrast.

There is perhaps not a more gracious word in the Bible than *nevertheless*. Israel provoked God "even at the Red sea (v. 7)." "**Nevertheless** he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known (v.8)." No matter what His people did, His love, grace, power, and commitment to saving them is **never the less!**

"For His name's sake" immediately calls to mind Matthew 1.21's "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." God's name, and with it His very honor and reputation, are at stake in the salvation of His people. He has a people He is pleased to call His own, and He is committed to saving every one of them. If He were to lose a single one of them, His *name* would be irreparably damaged. But again, He saved them to make His mighty power known. They of necessity must be horribly, desperately, in need of salvation, then, that He might the greater demonstrate His mighty power and grace in saving them.

The sevenfold repetitive theme of this Psalm is given in verses 43-46. In the very heart of these verses (which might well be called "the outline of redemption") is another gracious **nevertheless**:

- I. "Many times did He deliver them";
- II. "But they provoked Him with their counsel,"
- III. "And were brought low for their iniquity."
- IV. "**Nevertheless** He regarded their affliction, when He heard their cry":
- V. "And He remembered for them **His covenant**"
- VI. "And repented according to the multitude of His mercies."
- VII. "He made them also to be pitied of all those that carried them captives."

God's **covenant** is mentioned once (v. 45) in this Psalm.

5. In Acts 7.2-53, these fifty-two verses give one thousand years of Old Testament history, from Abraham to the building of Solomon's temple. Stephen, having been called before the high priest and his council, begins (v. 2-3) with the call of Abraham in Genesis 11.

Verses 4-7 of Acts 7 cover Genesis 12-15.

Stephen draws verse 8 from Genesis 17.

Verse 9 is Genesis 37.

Verse 10 is Genesis 41.

Verses 11-16 finish his comments on Genesis.

Verse 17-18 is a comment on several Old Testament passages: *But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham* harks back to Genesis 15.13-16, and *the people grew and multiplied in Egypt* takes us to Exodus 1.7. Acts 7.18 is Exodus 1.8.

Without further detailing verses 19-44 of Acts 7, these verses cover the rest of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

Acts 7.45-46, in two verses, covers the time from Joshua to David. *Joshua* is here translated *Jesus* because the names are one and the same in the Hebrew language.

Verse 47 summarizes 1 Kings 5-8.

Through verse 47, Stephen had recounted the history of Israel with which his hearers were totally familiar. They did not interrupt him. They agreed with what he said, until now.

In verse 48, however, Stephen departed, not from Biblical truth—he quoted from Isaiah 66.1f—but he

deviated sharply from the Jew's Council's view of themselves and their history. His application of what he had said thus far and his commentary on the Jews' present condition in the next three verses (v. 51-53) was so penetrating, they stoned him to death within the hour.

6. Acts 13.17-41, covers 2,000 years of the Bible, from Abraham in Genesis 11 to Christ. This is the first sermon of the apostle Paul where the words are actually recorded. He had gone to the Jews' synagogue in Antioch of Pisidia, and, being recognized as a travelling rabbi, he was invited to speak at the close of their meeting.

In verse 17 Paul covers all of Genesis and Exodus, chapters 1-15, grounding His further comments in God's sovereign election of the patriarchs.

Verse 18 covers the remaining four books of Moses.

Verse 19 covers the book of Joshua. Verse 20 covers Judges and Ruth.

Verse 21 addresses 1 and 2 Samuel.

In verse 22, Paul gets more specific in preaching God's sovereignty, first in His removing King Saul and raising up David as king, and second, in stating that God had said David would fulfill all of His will.

In verse 23, he then jumps the intervening thousand years from David to Jesus. This is the point to which he has been driving, which has brought him to cover the two thousand years from Abraham to Christ in a mere seven verses.

The next two verses (24-25) touch on John the Baptist as the forerunner of Christ; verses 26-39 Paul preaches Jesus the Christ crucified, buried, risen again—the *gospel*, as he defines it in 1 Corinthians 15.1-4.

In this sermon, Paul emphasizes God's promise (v. 23, 32), His fulfillment thereof (v. 27, 29, 33), and the literal, bodily, resurrection of Christ from the grave (v. 30, 33-36). Election, salvation, justification, and forgiveness of sins are also introduced in this, one of the most amazing sermons on record.

7. Hebrews 11.3-40 covers all 4,000 years of the Old Testament, bringing the reader into the New Testament era. Verse 3 goes back to the opening verse of Genesis. Then Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses' parents, Moses,

Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, and Samuel successively exemplify the faith of God's elect. These are followed by a host of unnamed saints (v.35-39) rounding out the Old Testament record.

Hebrews 11 has been called "the faith chapter," but faith is not abstract, some cloudy fluff floating invisibly and benignly in a saint's head or breast, or out in space. Faith must be rooted in someone or something. That someone or something in this case is God and His promises. Again the reader is reminded: To get "the big picture" of what a writer is really saying, one must *ignore chapter divisions and read large portions of the scriptures at a time*. **God's promises**, in which this faith is grounded, are mentioned eighteen times in Hebrews, but half of those mentions are in this passage on faith, in Hebrews 10.23 and 36, and chapter 11 verses 9, 11, 13, 17, 33, and 39.

Summary

Using these seven chapters as starting points to branch out into the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament will reward the reader with a sense of direction and a new view of where the emphases of the sacred scriptures lie. Eventually you will begin to notice repeated and connected facts. **Moses** is mentioned in all seven of these chapters, as is **the Exodus from Egypt**; and **the wilderness wandering** is documented in six of them. (Why does Hebrews 11 jump from Israel's crossing the Red Sea in verse 29 to the battle of Jericho in verse 30, skipping the intervening forty wilderness years?) **Abraham** and **David** are each mentioned in four. References to **God's covenant(s)** are found in all four of the Old Testament chapters; if you count Stephen's mentioning the *covenant of circumcision* (Acts 7.8) and count **the promises of God** Paul speaks of (Acts 13 and Hebrews 11) as the *covenant* promises they are, then all seven chapters can be said to speak of God's covenant(s). Such is only a beginning of the many things you will find, but it does begin to bring the Old Testament into perspective.

Finally, bringing this writing into perspective and for now to a close, let it be emphasized again: To read and to study the Bible is not in any way an attempt to educate ourselves into the kingdom of God; and, without light from the Lord above, all reading and all other efforts will be in vain. But to prove there is no

value in our reading God's word, one would have to somehow prove that God *never* gives His children that needed light and leadership. On the positive side, Paul spoke of those "who labour in the word and doctrine (1 Timothy 5.17)," and also said, "...ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord (1 Corinthians 15.58)."

As we have not nearly exhausted the subject of reading the scriptures, we hope to continue the theme in another installment, if the Lord has so willed.

—Elder C. C. Morris

Editor's note: The following article was sent in letter form and is therefore reproduced here as such.

LIGHT AND DARKNESS

"And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not (John 1.5)."

Elder Morris:

A brother asked for some comments from me regarding the above text while we were exchanging views by e-mail. After sending him a brief outline of some of the more pertinent points that flow out from the verse, I was blessed to have additional sweet meditations upon the text. During prayerful study it opened up to me in a fuller way, leading me to other corresponding scriptures. To what extent these thoughts may be profitable to our valuable readers of *The Remnant* I shall leave for them to determine.

Upon review it will be observed that the light of John 1.5 shined *in* the darkness, not simply on or upon it. For lack of a better way of stating it, I suggest John attributed to this darkness the quality of personification. The darkness must have been moved upon much in the same way, if not altogether, as is found in the following: "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters (Genesis 1.2)." The similarities to me are striking. It may be profitable to examine these similarities.

Perhaps it may be asked, "How is this personification of darkness and the original creation similar?" I respond, in countless ways. At present one similarity will be noticed, that of being "without form and void."

A careful examination of the original condition in the beginning will aptly portray what the "darkness" of man is like: chaotic and void. Darkness abides upon the face of the deep of man's soul, even his very being. It is darkness that defies description outside of the words of the Bible. "But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness (Matthew 6.23)!" This I understand to be a false perception of the true light; an evil opinion, such as the scribes and Pharisees entertained of Jesus. The light in them was false light, and O, how dark! "How great is that darkness!" Jude described the final end of those who live and die in darkness thusly: "Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever (Jude 13)." Could it possibly be painted in grimmer words? *The blackness of darkness for ever!* Frightful!

All the elect of God were at one time darkness until the Light of life revealed His glorious Self to them. I may add here that revelation of Himself was of pure, free grace. "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light (Ephesians 5.8)." Who can fail to marvel at the grace of God when reading this next text? "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me (Acts 26.18)."

Blessed, blessed grace, to learn the Light of the world would turn us from darkness to Himself.

Another compelling revelation of our deliverance from that black power is thus described: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son (Colossians 1.13)."

Another in the same vein is: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises

of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light (I Peter 2.9).”

All these verses manifest the same unmistakable truth: Before the Light of the world shined within, we were not simply in the dark; *we were darkness itself*. It was absolute darkness in which we were “without form and void” as regards our creative standing.

This is a truth worth stating often: When the light shines to within, there is never a positive response from the darkness. The darkness comprehends it not. In fact, the darkness has no power whatever to respond. There must attend also the divine command, “Let there be light,” such as there was in the original creation. How poorly we discern the magnitude of that light which then shined upon this void earth. Poorer still do we fathom the effulgence emanating from Jesus, the Light of the world. But, may His name be praised, the light does shine to our profit. God never works without a purpose.

The unavoidable question is, “If the light shineth in the darkness and the darkness comprehends it not, then where will it be seen and comprehended?”

“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (II Corinthians 4.6).” How opposite are the ways of God to human reasoning. We have learned positively from John 1.5 that the darkness comprehends not the light when shined inward. Poor man! He still thinks that is the way: “If only we could get the light to shine in on a sinner’s dark soul, possibly he would respond.”

Here in the letter to the Corinthians, Paul affirms the ways of our God. The light does not shine in; God commanded the light to shine *out of* darkness. Marvel of marvels. Where no light existed—where no light could penetrate—God spoke light out of that very darkness. It was a creative act. God commanded. The light shined from within to without. It was Christ formed within and radiating out in newness of life.

The purpose of God in bringing forth light from within the darkness was for the best of all reasons, in fact the only reason worthy of God. It was “to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” This knowledge cannot

and will not be known except from within one where God commands the light to shine. Furthermore, where this light does spring up, the inevitable result will always be the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus.

Wherein was the glory of God most manifested? In the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. The day-star arose. The dawning of a new day burst the bonds of the very belly of darkness. This is the glory of the Light of the world. And it is seen in the face of Jesus to bring the knowledge of it to the soul of those where He as the light shines.

“The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.” This sitting in darkness is the condition of all sinners until Jesus, the light of the world, is formed within. Previous to that, the soul was the region and shadow of death. Then happy, happy day when the darkness is past and light dawneth.

“Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes (I John 2.8-11).”

Solemn indeed! To be blessed to say the darkness is past; that is a joy that cannot be calculated. It brings forth a love of the brethren, for in the light they all appear in the beautiful garments of the New Jerusalem, the Lamb’s bride. There can be no hate, for that belongs to the outer regions of darkness. Truly, the darkness is past.

Elder Morris, I hope a portion of these brief thoughts may hold the same value to some other poor traveler in the dark as their worth has been to me. I am made to marvel that the light could shine in a being so dark as I often feel to be, but that is a portion of so sweet a hope.

May our prayer always correspond with the original command of God, “Let there be Light,” and let it always be proclaimed of us, “But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and

more unto the perfect day (Proverbs 4.18).” Conversely, let us give praise that it shall not be said of us, “The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble (verse 19).”

In hope of light,
James F. Poole

JOHN 6:63 AND THE LAZARUS TEST

It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life (John 6.63).

Self-styled evangelicals tell us, “We must get the word out to dying sinners.” The truth of the matter is, the sinners to whom they refer are not *dying* sinners, other than physically. They are already dead spiritually. The ones to whom they refer are those who are dead in trespasses and in sins. Evangelicals and others who believe in a “gospel regeneration” system assume that spiritual life is imparted by preaching the gospel to these dead sinners; that the power of regeneration is somehow contained in “the word” and the sinner’s hearing it.

Most people realize that identical actions under identical circumstances will produce identical results. That is how we learn repetitive skills. For example, if someone puts a drop of sulfuric acid on a copper penny, the acid will always corrode the penny, producing copper sulfate. This is true no matter who does it. One does not have to be a chemist to get such a result. Whenever people put the acid on a copper penny, wherever they are in the world, if it is done the same way with the same materials, it never fails. Like results will follow, always.

That is one of the facts that God has placed in nature that gives a desirable consistency and predictability to our lives and to our recipes. When we cook biscuits by following a recipe, we expect to get consistently good biscuits from the same procedure, ingredients, temperature, and time of baking. If things did not work this way, we would never know what would happen next. One time we might get

biscuits, the next time laundry soap, and the next time, an explosion.

Now, based on this experimental principle, that like procedures produce like results, here is a simple test anyone can conduct to see if Christ’s emphasis was on *the spoken word* or on *Himself as the one doing the speaking*. Anyone may try this experiment—male or female, old or young. Once and for all, he or she can be forever satisfied about how much power there really is in the bare spoken words.

First, go to a cemetery and find a grave of some man named Lazarus. This may be the hardest part of the entire experiment, but it will not be impossible. Published obituaries and cemetery records will help.

Next, having found such a grave, stand by the grave of Lazarus and cry with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth,” as closely as you can to the way Jesus did as recorded in John 11.43. Your words are the acid, your Lazarus is the copper penny. What is the result? Did Lazarus come forth?

If the dead man named Lazarus comes forth, then the free-willer’s point is proved; the power is indeed in the spoken word, and perhaps we should get the spoken word out to dead sinners right away, as the Arminians have been telling us. The same spoken word should work the same way on every sinner, if the power is proved to be in the spoken word.

If your Lazarus does not come forth, however, perhaps it is not the English words, but the Greek words of the New Testament which need to be cried with a loud voice. But, of course, we realize that Christ did not speak English. What He said was not the English sentence, “Lazarus, come forth,” but the words He actually said, “Λαζαρε, δευρο εξω,” as found in the Greek New Testament, sounded more like, “LA-dza-rae, DEU-ro ED-zoe.” Try crying *that* with a loud voice before leaving the cemetery.

If the resurrection power is still proved to be not in the spoken words themselves, maybe the problem is that your voice is not loud enough. The text, remember, says Jesus cried with a loud voice; so, you also must cry aloud, as He did.

If you yet must give up and leave your Lazarus in the grave, doubtless something is wrong with the free-will “evangelical” theory. This would tend to indicate that the old Primitive Baptists are right: **The**

power is not in the words, but in the Speaker, Jesus Christ, the *living* Word of God.

If everyone in the world, including Jesus, uses the same words, but only Jesus gets results when he uses these words, then it is clear the power is not in the words but in the one who speaks them. Therefore, where is the emphasis in John 6.63, when Jesus said, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life"?

The emphasis in Christ's statement was not on *the words* themselves, then, as if the words were spirit and life, no matter who speaks them; but it is on the *I* of John 6.63, Jesus Christ, who speaks spirit and life to the dead sinner.

Should any advocates of the free-will doctrine try this experiment, we'd like to hear from them about what results they had.

—Elder C. C. Morris

PRIMITIVE BAPTIST LIBRARY FURNACE FUND

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Primitive and Old School Baptist churches, and our friends:

Most of you are aware of the Primitive Baptist Library, located at Elon College, North Carolina. For many years it has served as a repository for all types of books, manuscripts, association minutes and other materials such as church records and photographs of churches and ministers. Nearly everything has now been cataloged and arranged for easy access. Unless you have visited there recently it would be hard to imagine how many valuable materials pertaining to the church of God are contained there.

For many years the property and library was ably maintained by Elder W. J. Berry and his dear wife, Sister Mable Berry. Since Elder Berry's death, Sister Berry and the trustees have done a splendid job keeping the grounds, the buildings and the contents of the library in good repair and well maintained, despite very limited funds and very little encouragement from abroad. The work that has gone into the collection and preservation of all materials at the

library cannot be calculated. But they now need the assistance of the Baptists if the Library is to be secure and lasting.

Any library needs well-maintained temperature to preserve the books and manuscripts from unnecessary deterioration. To be specific, the furnace at the library is in bad need of being replaced. There are no funds for such contingencies.

The library needs your help.

If you can help with a large or small donation, please assist them. Their untiring efforts are a wonderful service to preserve our history and deserve our liberal support. We urge your prayerful consideration. We further urge you to do what you can.

Send any contributions to:

**The Primitive Baptist Library
C/O Furnace Fund
4031 Highway 87 N
Elon College, NC 27244**

The Remnant has not often asked for any support for various causes. We feel this is a worthy exception. Remember, the library belongs to all of us today, and to future generations as well.

—James F Poole

THE GOSPEL

"The gospel...preeminently inculcates the fear of God. It invokes the worship and glorification of God as the chief duty of man. It demands that God be acknowledged as creator and sovereign Lord of the universe. What a commentary upon modern preaching! Where is the pulpit who thunders out the fear of God and His absolute sovereignty? This modern gospel of church programs, tithing, materialism, will-worship and a human choice that dictates to God is not the everlasting gospel. It is another gospel which is not another, but a perversion of the gospel of Christ (Galatians 1:6,7)."

(Cleve Brantley, *The Tie That Binds*, page 21f)

BOOKS FOR SALE

EDITORIALS OF

ELDER GILBERT BEEBE

These books contain the editorial writings of Elder Beebe, from 1832 to his death in 1881. They embrace the whole range of Bible topics. Beebe was a firm Absolute Predestinarian and disciplinarian. He is widely considered to have no equal among the Old School, or Primitive Baptist writers.

Books are hard-bound in F grade library buckram cloth.

Volume 1 - 768 pages

Volume 2 - 768 pages

Volume 3 - 480 pages

Volume 4 - 512 pages

Volume 5 - 480 pages

Volume 6 - 480 pages

\$20.00 each, postage paid.

THE NAKED BOW OF GOD

William Huntington, S.S.

1 copy - \$6.00 postage paid.

A MEMOIR OF WILLIAM GADSBY

224 pages

F grade library buckram cloth covers

1 copy - \$12.00 postage paid.

THE CHRIST-MAN IN TYPE

Elder David Bartley

182 pages, paper cover

THE BEST BOOK IN CIRCULATION ON THE TYPES

Covering Adam; Melchisedec; Isaac; Joseph; Moses; Joshua;

Aaron; Jonah; Boaz; David.

1 copy - \$8.00 postage paid.

FEAST OF FAT THINGS

New and enlarged edition. 116 pages, paper cover.

Includes the Black Rock Address.

1 copy - \$7.00 postage paid.

A SECOND FEAST

“The doctrine of the Old Order of Baptists”

Chapter titles and authors:

The Sovereignty of God, Gilbert Beebe

Election, F. A. Chick

The Will of Man, H. M. Curry

Repentance, J. F. Johnson

Baptism, Beebe

The Gospel, Silas Durand

The New Birth, Curry

Good Works, David Bartley

Romans 8.28, Johnson

The Church, Curry

Absolute Predestination, Beebe

Resurrection of the Dead, Durand

The Judgment, Beebe

1 copy - \$12.00 postage paid.

THE TRIAL OF JOB

Elder Silas Durand

F grade library buckram cover, 248 pages

1 copy - \$14.00 postage paid.

THE TIE THAT BINDS

A Study in Predestination

by Cleve Brantley

Paper cover, 80 pages

\$5.00 each, postage paid.

5 copies, \$20.00 postage paid.

Send all orders to:

The Remnant Publications

P. O. Box 1004

Hawkins, TX 75765-1004

Phone 903-769-4822

Texas residents *only* add 6.75% sales tax on all books.

Saints Rest Primitive Baptist Church
THE REMNANT PUBLICATIONS
P. O. BOX 1004
HAWKINS, TX 75765-1004

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

NONPROFIT ORG.
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
HAWKINS, TX 75765
PERMIT NO. 39

A STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES:

The following is an outline of principles the readers of *The Remnant* may expect to see maintained in this publication. Under no circumstances do the publishers or writers for *The Remnant* seek to delineate herein a standard of doctrine or views to be imposed upon the readers. Rather, we set these principles before the readers that they may know what general principles guide our efforts. All attempts at declaring articles of faith will be marred by prejudices and frailty, and ours are by no means any exception.

We believe these principles are, in the main, harmonious with the articles of faith published by predestinarian associations and churches of the old order of Baptists known as Primitive, Particular, or Old School Baptists the world over.

1—The eternal existence, sovereignty, immutability, omnipotence, and perfections of Jehovah God; He has revealed Himself as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and these sacred Three are One; Jesus Christ was and is God manifest in the flesh, and in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;

2—The Old and New Testaments in their original languages are the verbally inspired word of God, and they are the complete and only valid guide of faith and practice; the King James Version is the preferred English translation;

3—The will of the eternal God is the first cause of all causes;

4—The absolute predestination of all things;

5—The eternal personal election of the redeemed in Christ, before the world began, and their eternal, vital union with Him; their number is fixed, certain, and sure, and can neither be increased nor diminished; their fall in their federal head Adam into spiritual death, total depravity, and just condemna-

tion; their utter inability to recover themselves from this fallen state;

6—The blood atonement and redemption by Jesus Christ are for the elect only, and are both efficacious and effectual in accomplishing the will and purpose of God to reconcile His people unto Himself;

7—The sovereign, irresistible, effectual work of the Holy Spirit in quickening the elect of God; the new birth is by the direct operation of the Holy Spirit without the use of any means;

8—The final preservation, perseverance, and eternal happiness of all the sons of God, by grace alone;

9—No works are good works other than those which God Himself has so designated; none of the works called good are left up to men to perform or not, at the creature's discretion; nor do the works of the creature, either before or after regeneration, result in merit accruing to his account in God's sight;

10—The peaceable fruits of righteousness are the certain result of God's working in His people both to will and to do of His good pleasure, and His people will be found walking in paths of righteousness for His name's sake;

11—The separation of church and state;

12—The principles outlined in the Black Rock Address of 1832;

13—The bodily resurrection, first of Christ, and also that of all the dead;

14—The final and eternal judgment; and,

15—The bliss of the redeemed and the torment of the wicked are both eternal and everlasting.