

The Remnant

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

July-August, 1999

Volume 13, No.4

THE FAITH OF JESUS

Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus (Revelation 14.12).

BIBLE subjects are nearly always interesting to those who write them, but often are not so to the reader. It is my desire that this Bible subject will not only be interesting to the reader, but that it will also prove profitable to their soul, serving to magnify the grace of God by revealing a portion of His truth to needy sinners.

The text speaks of the patience of the saints, the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. In this article, only the faith of Jesus will be reviewed. Observe carefully, the text does not refer to faith *in* Jesus but *the faith of Jesus*. Jesus, the Son of God, was also Jesus, the son of Mary. Jesus was His earthly name, a name given Him by heavenly authority. “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins (Matthew 1.21).”

It is the faith of this Jesus, the Son of Mary, the Son of God, this writer will endeavor to set forth in its fullness and beauty. The Christ-child, that Holy thing born by special generation in the womb of Mary by the Spirit of the Father, was a human, so his name was called Jesus, just as all humans have names and are so identified. That the name Jesus means Saviour will be addressed later. The faith of Jesus is our current pursuit.

FAITH, BY DEFINITION

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11.1).” The children of God have for centuries been satisfied with the meaning of faith as given here by Paul. Their faith looks out beyond the present and substantiates that for which they hope. Faith then gives evidence to that trusting one regarding the thing hoped for. In the simplest of terms, ask yourself, what is it that you hope for beyond this life? Is it not life after death? Is it not the resurrection from the dead? Do not those whose faith looks up to God rely on His good word, believing when this life of toil is finished they will unite with all the blood-washed band in that eternal home? Surely there can be no real disagreement here. The object of faith is the righteousness of Jesus our Lord. The purpose of our faith is that the righteousness of Jesus will avail for us when life is done. Faith is the evidence being substantiated to us that our hope will be realized.

“Now the just shall live by faith...(Hebrews 10.38).” The grand question now is, did Jesus, in His humility and while in this world, clothed in human form, live by faith? Some have suggested that it would be unnecessary for Jesus to live by faith because He was God. Yes, He was God; He was also man! As man He came to this world to die. Yes, He came to die! There was no other reason why God the Son was clothed in flesh other than to suffer and die for all His chosen family. As the justifier of His flock it should not be thought a thing incredible that He would live by faith, being just.

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

Then facing death, exactly as all humans face death, and a death infinitely worse than any death we might imagine, does it really seem incredible that Jesus, in the flesh, would trust His Father? Is it not reasonable that He would have faith in the promise the Father made to Him? The promise that the Father would raise Him from the dead? Would He believe that the promises would be realized or not? The Lord willing, evidences of the faith Jesus manifested as a human will be forthcoming.

THE HUMANITY OF JESUS

Introducing the thought that Jesus had faith, real faith in His Father, may seem unusual, especially since many have no firm concept of what faith is.

Faith is too often regarded as simply believing. Beyond this idea of faith some become uneasy. There has been so much said about “only believe” and “exercise your faith” many have unwittingly adopted these sentiments. It seems odd to some to think God the Son *needed* faith. Rest easy. Do not be frightful, fearing that to speak of Jesus as human, as a corporeal, fleshly being, having faith too, is to deprecate His divinity.

Fear not, little flock; Jesus has revealed Himself to us as *both* God and man. Jesus is, always was, and evermore shall be, the eternal Son of God. Jesus is, and everlastingly shall be, the Son of man. “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us...(John 1.14).”

“But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men (Philippians 2.7).”

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same...(Hebrews 2.14).”

“But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? And why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet (Luke 24.37-40).”

Mark well! This citation from Luke was *after* the resurrection. Jesus was yet clothed with flesh and bones. And so shall we all see Him in the coming world of glory. I have no doubt that Jesus will appear to all the redeemed in heaven with the same body in which he lived, suffered, died, was buried, and which was raised from the dead.

It will be the same body in which he offered his sacrifice to His Father, after the resurrection, and the same body the disciples saw ascend to heaven. Jesus *was* God manifest in the flesh. Jesus *is* God manifest in the flesh. Jesus *shall always be* God manifest in the flesh.

Jesus was God. So was Jesus man. Jesus was God clothed in flesh. He was in every respect man like we are men, though being conceived by the Holy Ghost He could not, and did not, sin. As we shall see, His humanity was, and is, central to our hope.

JESUS THE MEDIATOR

“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (I Timothy 2.5).” It is absolutely necessary to see that Jesus is, and ever shall be, the one mediator between an offended God and His offending creatures. Ordinary intelligence regarding mediators tells us a mediator must be capable to represent the interests of one party to the other party. In natural circumstances, the more the mediator knows of both parties the more he shall be competent to reconcile whatever variances exist between the parties. How much more so must our mediator be conversant with the experiences and passions of man, while at the same time be fully suited to represent a holy God?

In Hebrews, Paul takes us through a series of things of which Jesus is *better*. In chapter 8, three of these are worth mention here:

1. His ministry contrasted with the ministry of Moses.
2. The better covenant.
3. The better promises. “But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, [than that of Moses] by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises (Hebrews 8.6).”

Moses could certainly feel the afflictions and sorrows of the sons of Jacob, but he was also crippled with sin and thus his mediatorship was limited. Like the rest of the Israelites, he too died. His body yet remains in the ground. Due to the weakness of the flesh, the covenant between God and Israel was also not suited to redeem, despite its holy content and divine origin. Man could not rise to the standard the law required and thus they, along with Moses, were yet in their sins. The promises there were of the natural sort. Even had some way been found (an impossibility) for Israel to keep the covenant, the best it could render them was temporal blessings. Jesus, our mediator, has been established as our better and eternal priest at the right hand of the Father, having received the benefits of better promises resulting from a better covenant. This forms the basis of the imparting of His faith to His elect. It is the one faith, once delivered to the saints. If Jesus did not abide at the right hand of the Father, representing us to the Father, and the Father to us, we could have no gift of faith.

JESUS AND THE BETTER PROMISES

It is accepted by Old School Baptists universally that Jesus came to save us from our sins. Furthermore, His Father was pleased to send Him for this very purpose. Jesus came in behalf of all His chosen children; chosen in Him from the foundation of the world. They were His as a gift from the Father. He was, therefore, under divine commitment, as their representative, to undertake for them what they could not do for themselves. It should be fair to say, the eternal Son of God covenanted with the Father to undertake for His own. Further, it should be recognized that God the Father accepted the covenant promise of His Son to redeem those elect ones that were to fall in Adam the first. Now, it is a recognized fact, covenants are promises between two parties and not simply one. Since the Son promised, or covenanted, to redeem His own, then what part of the covenant promises did the Father engage in? Just this: the Son would divest Himself of all heavenly glory. He would assume a body the Father prepared for Him. He would be made a little lower than the angels. As Jesus, the Son would be born, live and die under the law; the law the whole family had failed to keep. Jesus would be buried as are all other dead beings. It is here the Father’s covenant with the Son in seen. It is here heaven and earth came to terms. God the Father, would, being fully satisfied with the work of His Son to redeem His chosen, raise Him from the dead. Jesus had faith that the Father would not leave Him in the tomb but raise Him from the dead as promised.

This is the heart of the matter. God the Father promised the Son a regeneration from the dead based upon the Son’s promise to fully satisfy all the Father’s requirements for the chosen children. “But God raised him from the dead (Acts 13.30).” With limited space this must suffice to show the reason it is necessary to recognize that Jesus had faith; faith just like we have except that all true faith originates with Jesus (Hebrews 12.2). It is this faith of Jesus now to be examined.

THE OBJECT OF JESUS’ FAITH

The object is very clearly seen throughout the New Testament and especially in the Book of Acts. The object is the *resurrection* from the tomb. Jesus trusted His Father to secure Him in death and on the

third day raise Him in full victory over the last enemy. Pause and wonder! Jesus knew from the beginning what He faced; the trials and anguish; the cruel mockings and brutality. More than all else, Jesus knew that He must voluntarily die so all those for whom He was responsible might live.

The day of Pentecost came. Miracles attested to the magnitude of the moment. Peter stood up and preached the everlasting gospel. Hear him now as they heard him then: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it (Acts 2.22-24)." Three things here are necessary to our study. 1. Peter said Jesus was a *man approved* of God. 2. God delivered Him up to die. 3. God raised Him from the dead. The approved man was suitable to die to serve the purposes of God and in consequences thereof God was pleased to raise Him from the bonds of death. Can it be denied that Jesus, as man, trusted His Father that He would honor His work and not leave Him in the grave? Was this faith or not? What was the object of the faith of Jesus? His resurrection by the Father.

Peter continues his discourse. He speaks of David in verses 25 through 29. We shall have occasion to return to these verses. Then: "Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses (Acts 2.30-32)." The weight of these verses must not be overlooked. Peter affirms the humanity of Jesus from David's words that "of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh." Can words be made more plain? He fortifies his conclusions with "This Jesus hath God raised up." It would be remarkable indeed for anyone to read these verses and not see, 1. The humanity of Jesus, and 2. The importance of the resurrection of

Jesus from the dead. Again, this is the object of the faith of Jesus.

A reading of the following texts in the book of Acts should at once convince the honest heart that predominant in the messages of the early disciples was the resurrection of Jesus from the dead: 3.15; 3.26; 4.10; 4.33; 5.30. Peter carries this same blessed resurrection message to the house of Cornelius, Acts 10.40. None, however, shall ever surpass in clarity the witness of Paul at Antioch in Pisidia. "And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre. But God raised him from the dead (Acts 13.28-30)." This says it all. God raised Him from the dead! The faith of Jesus was not in vain.

Paul continues by reminding them of the promise God had made to their fathers. Now, according to Paul, God had fulfilled that promise. What was the promise? "God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again, as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David (Acts 13. 33,34)." *Jesus was begotten from the dead.* This God had promised Him through the fathers and their children. Jesus believed the promises in a way that no one else might. He trusted them completely for His holy resurrection to occur three days after laying down His life for the sheep. From the beginning, Jesus knew the path He must tread; the end of the law-fulfilling journey. It was His death. He was sustained in this journey by faith that God would indeed raise Him from the dead. This was the object of His faith.

THE HUMAN JESUS

Proof has already been offered that Jesus was human. Few will stumble here who trust the Word of God. It should be remembered, however, that Jesus was in all respects as human as all other humans, sin excepting. Consider: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man (Luke 2.52)." Truly amazing! But it should not be amazing when you recognize that Jesus

was indeed a man. Remember, it was His manhood that qualified Him as mediator in behalf of men. Early in the ministry of Jesus He was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be *tempted* of the Devil. The evil one waited until Jesus had fasted forty days and forty nights and when Jesus was hungry (Matthew 4.2). Dreadful scene, Jesus being tempted during His physical extremity. Afterward, angels came and ministered unto Him, again showing His physical limitations. Jesus knew weariness and fatigue. Jesus knew agonies and grief. At the tomb of Lazarus He groaned within Himself and was troubled.

Furthermore, the Scriptures say, "Jesus wept." Jesus, wholly God, yet wholly man. Can we fathom the sorrows He experienced? Hardly. It would be safe to say that Jesus as man experienced the whole range of emotions that ordinary, everyday people experience. The glory is, He met each emotion with holy success. Moreover, all Jesus experienced was in behalf of His seed. They were His responsibility for God had given them to the Son in eternity past. Jesus became human because of the elect humanity.

THE HUMAN TIE

It is beyond question that Jesus was man as well as God. Then for what purposes was He human, some may ask? "For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted (Hebrews 2.18)." See here two things; first, He Himself was tempted. Second, He is therefore able to succour us who likewise are tempted. Jesus did suffer temptations, though never yielding. It was His experience with temptations that moved Him to compassion towards His brethren who also suffer the same.

"Seeing then that we have a great high priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin (Hebrews 4.14, 15)." Hear this brethren; Jesus can be touched. He feels our infirmities. All our sorrows He has experienced. In *all points*, the apostle says, He, Jesus the Son of God, was tempted. When sickness or death invades our lives; "when sorrows encompass us round; and many

distresses we see" be sure Jesus has gone before. Well-meaning friends may offer condolences by saying, "I know just what you are going through" when often they have no idea. Not so with our Lord; He has been in all circumstances such as we and came off the victor.

FAITH ON TRIAL

There are many compelling texts that might be employed to verify Jesus had real faith. Several shall suffice. From the positive side first: "And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him (James 5.15)."

Clearly, the thought here is regarding the saints afflictions and the prayer of faith by those concerned for their welfare. It seems plain enough then, if we, as the brethren of Jesus, experience the times when we must call on heaven's assistance in our griefs, if Jesus has been in all points tried as we, He too must have often prayed the prayer of faith. We know Jesus prayed often, sometimes going up into a mountain and pouring out His heart to the Father all night in prayer. Can it be possibly imagined that His prayers *were not of faith*?

"Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ (I Peter 1. 6,7)."

Having previously seen from Hebrews 4.14, 15 that Jesus was tempted in all points like as we, then how could it be possible that we could have our faith tried and He not? Could Jesus be tempted in all points like as we except this point? I think not! It can well be thought that many times when our dear Lord pondered His impending sufferings and horrible death, the abandonment of the sheep and the loss of the Father's presence, His faith was sorely tried. We may rejoice that it never failed.

Jesus was more than God come to redeem. Jesus was also man come to be a fit substitute for all His brethren so that redemption could be based on both mercy and justice. God the Father would be merciful only when justice had been satisfied. Jesus satisfied

that justice and in so doing He experienced the whole range of trials that rendered Him a satisfactory sacrifice. You may be sure then, when your faith is sorely tried, Jesus has been there before you and was victorious.

Looking back one verse from those quoted above it will be noticed that Peter offered considerable assurance to those that were to have their faith tried. "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time (1 Peter 1.5)." Should it be beyond the normal, then, that our dear Lord was also kept in His trials of faith by the power of God the Father?

It cannot be imagined that Jesus did not believe His Father would keep Him, even in death. This was faith in the purest and fullest sense of the word. Listen to the Saviour as He groans out the last of life as a suffering substitute: "And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost (Luke 23.46)."

Faith was never more on display than here. Trusting His Father to the last breath that He would bring Him forth victorious over death, hell and the grave, Jesus volunteered His holy spirit unto the Father and freely, without external compulsion, died in faith. Literally, Jesus trusted God His Father to raise Him from the dead three days later, as had been prophesied and as He had told His disciples. This was faith!

"By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death: and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him (Hebrews 11.5,6)." The length of this article prohibits an extensive review of this critical text. With the following question I shall leave it for the next installment: Could it be possible that the body must have faith to please God the Father and the head not need faith to please Him as well?

The Lord willing, the next article will round out some of the other texts that support the sublime truth that the faith we, as the children of God, have is the impartation of the faith that Jesus had in the Father.

It will be shown that they both are one and look to the same end, the glorious resurrection from the dead. Christ the firstfruits, and they that are His at His coming.

—Elder James F Poole
30233 Mallard Drive
Delmar MD 21875

WHAT HAPPENED TO AHAB

Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which is in Samaria: behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it. And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine (1 Kings 21.18f).

IN a previous article (*The Remnant*, March-April, 1999, "A Better Vineyard?"), I commented on King Ahab's murder of Naboth and Elijah's prophecy that forms the text cited above. I closed by saying that, in addition to (1) the dogs' licking the blood of Ahab at the exact spot where they licked the blood of Naboth, three other events must take place exactly as God said they would: (2) The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel; (3) him that dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat; and (4) him that dieth [of Ahab] in the field shall the fowls of the air eat.

The fulfillment of these prophecies, or of any other prophecy, proves the absolute predestination of all things. This is so because whenever God unerringly prophesies a future event, and that event later happens exactly as it was prophesied, that event must have been fixed and certain from *at least* the time of the prophecy. If the prophecy does not come to pass, then it would not be true, and God Himself would therefore be untrue. But, "Let God be true but every man a liar (Romans 3.4)": "For **He spake, and it was done**; He commanded, and it stood fast (Psalm 33.9)." He spake, and it was done; but a prophecy is God speaking! A prophecy may be thought of as a public announcement of a decree of God before He brings it to pass. One of the many values of a

prophecy is that it proves that no person or power can change or affect God's predestinated purpose. His very speaking it, nay, even His merely thinking it, is sufficient to bring it to pass. "The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, **Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand** (Isaiah 14.24)." Do you want to know what God has purposed? Then observe how things stand.

Our contention is simple: If any event in the future is fixed, or certain, to the extent that it must certainly come to pass and cannot be otherwise, then this event can be defined as destined to come to pass, predetermined to happen, or predestinated. Since our God has declared not only the end from the beginning, but He also says, "and from ancient times **the things that are not yet done**, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure (Isaiah 46.10)," then all things are *ipso facto* predestinated. Any event that is prophesied (as are the four events involving Ahab and his family, above), being yet future, is among *the things that are not yet done*. And any prophesied event must be fixed or certain, or else the prophecy itself is unjustified.

THE MURDER OF NABOTH

King Ahab and queen Jezebel murdered not only Naboth, but his sons also, thereby eliminating any future claim on Naboth's property by his family or a possible retaliation from them. The death of Naboth's sons, although not mentioned in 1 Kings—you have to go to 2 Kings 9.26 to find this fact—is nevertheless extremely important. Was Ahab responsible for the murderous death of Naboth? Then God has decreed that Ahab must needs die a violent and *bloody* death. Was Ahab responsible for the death of Naboth's children, also? Then his children must also meet a similar end. God's rule, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," is the fearfully accurate and inviolable mandate of the Sovereign God.

THE PROPHECY

Elijah prophesied, "Thus saith the Lord, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine...And of Jezebel also spake the Lord, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. Him that dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat; and him that dieth in the field shall

the fowls of the air eat (1 Kings 21.19-24)." To bring these many future deaths to pass exactly as prophesied, God must indeed be in control of every eventuality—in other words, His predestination of specific future events must be absolute.

THE ALLIANCE

Jehoshaphat, who in the relative sense was a good king (in the absolute sense, of course, "there is none that doeth good, no not one," Romans 3.12), ruled in Jerusalem at that time. He had no good reason to associate himself with Ahab, one of the most wicked kings of all time. Will-worshippers will be quick to say he could have saved himself a lot of trouble if he would have simply obeyed the principle of 2 Corinthians 6.14: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" Nor do we at all commend Jehoshaphat's alliance with Ahab, any more than the will-worshippers would.

Yet, God had a reason—or reasons—for the union of these two Hebrew kings. Of those reasons, which themselves would warrant another article, here are three only: (1) to providentially give occasion for the inquiry at the Lord's mouth (1 Kings 22.5ff) as to the advisability of going to battle with the Syrians; (2) to providentially give occasion to magnificently demonstrate the Lord's gracious protection and deliverance of His children (in this case, king Jehoshaphat), even when they are in sinful surroundings and undertakings; and (3) to providentially give occasion to rebuke Jehoshaphat, that God might enable him to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3.18)."

Only the first of these reasons has a direct relation to Ahab. There is no evidence whatsoever that God had any such gracious purposes for him as He did for Jehoshaphat. We turn now to

THE INQUIRY

One reason Jehoshaphat was brought into the unholy alliance with Ahab was to bring about the inquiry concerning the prudence of entering a war with the Syrians. This inquiry showed that Jehoshaphat, who wanted to pray to Jehovah about it, had a tender heart toward the Lord. "Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, Inquire, I pray thee, at the

word of the Lord to day.” The inquiry also showed that Ahab’s heart was the opposite.

Ahab and Jezebel, to whom God had delivered a major religious defeat that resulted in the death of their four hundred prophets of Baal, had by now accumulated four hundred more false prophets. There is never a shortage of false prophets. Ahab’s ministerial alliance unanimously said, “Go up; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king.”

Judah’s king Jehoshaphat knew the difference between true and false ministers. “Is there not here a prophet of the Lord besides, that we might inquire of him?” he asked.

“There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the Lord: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil,” said the king of Israel.

Tender-hearted Jehoshaphat said, “Let not the king say so.” He insisted until Ahab sent for Micaiah, the true prophet of the Lord.

While they were waiting for Micaiah to be brought, “[Ahab] the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah sat each on his throne, having put on their robes, in a void place in the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets [of Baal] prophesied before them.” That is, Ahab’s ministerial alliance entertained them. Zedekiah, their director of dramatics, put on a one-act show to amuse the crowd. He “...made him horns of iron: and he said, Thus saith the Lord, With these shalt thou push the Syrians, until thou have consumed them.”

Meanwhile, the messenger who had gone to get Micaiah told him, just this once, agree with the other prophets and say something encouraging. Tell king Ahab what he wants to hear. He has itchy ears, it is suggested; please scratch them (see 2 Timothy 4.3ff). The prophet replied, “As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak.”

So he came to the king. And the king said unto him, “Micaiah, shall we go against Ramoth-Gilead to battle, or shall we forbear?” And he answered him, “Go, and prosper: for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king.”

Micaiah’s dry humor has never been surpassed, in answering the king with *exactly* the words he wanted to hear, *exactly* as the false prophets had spoken. Nor was the sarcastic wit of his prophecy wasted on Ahab.

Ahab, furious, now said unto him, “How many times shall I adjure thee that thou tell me nothing but that which is true in the name of the Lord?” The Hebrew word translated *adjure* is of great significance: According to Strong, it means “*to seven oneself, i.e. swear (as if by repeating a declaration seven times)*” indicating to cause or make to swear. The *seven* goes back to the number seven’s signifying *completeness*—Ahab’s demand was for a complete and total oath, a swearing “to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God.”

If Micaiah’s witty reply has never been equaled, much more so was the magnificent account of his awe-inspiring, God-given vision that followed, a vision which has never been eclipsed, a vision of the very control-room of the universe, the throne room of God.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

Being put under oath, Micaiah left on record for all posterity as great a glimpse of the sovereignty of God as scarcely any other prophet has ever done. If it were not for what Micaiah says here, if Absolute Predestinarians could be accused of “making this up,” if they said these things without the warrant of sacred Scripture, they would surely be accused of “making God the author of sin” even more than they are so falsely accused even now. But we have the word of this inspired prophet recorded here for all time and posterity. Here is the inspired account of what he said:

“And he said, I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd: and the Lord said, These have no master: let them return every man to his house in peace...And he said, Hear thou therefore the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left. And the Lord said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-Gilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade him. And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so. Now therefore, behold, the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy

prophets, and the Lord hath spoken evil concerning thee (1 Kings 22.17ff).”

Micaiah plainly preached a God who is sovereign over the evil every bit as much as He is over the good, something that is as foreign to modern man’s doctrines as it was to Ahab’s false prophets.

THE BATTLE AND THE ARROW

From the human standpoint, you would think Ahab, with such warnings and prophecies as Elijah and Micaiah had pronounced against him, would have avoided the battle at all costs. He could not and did not, however, because he was inexorably caught up in God’s predestinated purpose.

Ahab did indeed scheme to thwart the prophecy, but it was to no avail, as we will soon see. “And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself, and enter into the battle; but put thou on thy robes. And the king of Israel disguised himself, and went into the battle.” Poor gullible Jehoshaphat went along with this suggestion. He dressed in his royal robes while Ahab disguised himself as a common soldier. Should not Jehoshaphat have known he was making himself a standout target for every Syrian on the battlefield?

But to put it in unmistakable terms, it simply was not Jehoshaphat’s time to die. It was Ahab’s. God put it in the heart of the Syrian king to command his soldiers, “Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king of Israel.” The battle was engaged, “And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, Surely it is the king of Israel. And they turned aside to fight against him: and Jehoshaphat cried out. And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots perceived that it was not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him.”

The parallel account in 2 Chronicles goes a bit more into detail: “And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, It is the king of Israel. Therefore they compassed about him to fight: *but Jehoshaphat cried out, and the Lord helped him; and God moved them to depart from him.* For it came to pass, that, when the captains of the chariots perceived that it was not the king of Israel, they turned back again from pursuing him (2 Chronicles 18.31f).”

A comparison of the two texts in 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles shows that God is behind the scene working His predestinated will even though the text does not explicitly say so every time. This should answer those who continually harp on the sparsity of the word *predestination* in the Bible. The Bible does not have to say something every few sentences to make it so. It is as true if God said it once as it would be had He said it a million times.

“And a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness: wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host; for I am wounded (1 Kings 22.34).” All of Ahab’s scheming could not prevent this one act that brought about his death that day.

A certain man. There was nothing uncertain about it from God’s standpoint. From that certain man’s standpoint, what he did was uncertain. It was *at a venture*, a perhaps, a maybe, a “who knows?” God knew. This certain man and his arrow were predestinated from all eternity for this very day, this split second. In that instant, it was as though nothing else existed in the universe except God, Ahab, one certain man, and his arrow shot at a peradventure.

The arrow “smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness,” a gap perhaps at most about a half an inch wide, where the breastplate fastens across a man’s back.

No archer could have deliberately aimed and hit such a mark, the joints of the harness of a man in a moving chariot far across a tumultuous battlefield. Consider what would be involved in hitting a distant moving target. The following—not necessarily in order of their importance—are some of the things, from the perspective of the laws of physics, which one would have to take into account to make the perfect shot:

1. The weight of the arrow: A heavier arrow would fall sooner but would carry a more penetrating momentum to the end, while a lighter arrow would perhaps fly further but be more subject to being blown to the side by a breeze.

2. The angle of trajectory: The vertical angle at which the arrow was released would make a difference in how far the arrow flew and the angle at which it would hit its target.

3. The direction, or the angle to the left or right must be exactly so, or else it would have missed Ahab's harness-joint even if everything else had been perfectly timed and executed.

4. The strength of the archer: Generally, the stronger the archer, the fuller he could draw his bow, and the farther, faster, and more powerfully the arrow would fly. But again, the fatigue the man experienced (he had been fighting for hours) would tend to counteract his strength, and the arrow would not fly as far, as speedily, or as powerfully. Consequently, there was a certain balance between *this certain man's* strength and weariness which exactly determined the arrow's course.

5. Again, the power of the bow itself would affect the man using it as well as the arrow's flight in terms of speed, distance, and accuracy. The stronger the bow, the harder it would be to draw it; but in the hands of a strong-enough man, it would send the arrow farther, faster, and with more penetrating power.

6. The timing of the arrow's release, in conjunction with these other factors, would determine whether it got to its target too early (before Ahab moved into it), too late (landing where Ahab had just been), or exactly on time.

7. The speed of the arrow must be exactly right, from the time of its release to the time it hit its destination, or else it would have hit before or after Ahab was in its way.

8. The position of Ahab's moving chariot on the battlefield must be exact, at the exact appointed time, and that was circumstantially determined by every skirmish Ahab had been in all day long. If he had chased after (or fled from) one Syrian more or less, or he and his chariot-driver had taken one second more or less in any engagement, he would not have been there to meet the arrow with his name on it.

9. The element of time applies to the position of the chariot, just discussed in the previous point; for, if the timing was off, then the chariot's position would have been off sufficiently to prevent Ahab's being hit exactly when, where, and how he was.

10. The direction of the chariot's movement—whether toward, sideways to, or away from the archer who killed him—contributed to positioning Ahab the better to advantageously receive the deadly shaft.

11. Ahab's position within the chariot, whether he was fore or aft, port or starboard, and the direction he was facing that instant; all, all must be exact, and his driver must not be in the way to block the arrow.

12. The speed of the chariot had to be just so, neither too fast nor too slow, to get Ahab to the appointed place just as the arrow arrived.

13. The wind's direction contributed to the arrow's drift to one side or the other, however much or little, bringing it on its exact predetermined course.

14. The wind's velocity likewise, whether strong that day or mild, in the providence of our Sovereign God, pushed the arrow more or less, just as God intended, to bring it exactly to its target.

15. The relative elevations of the shooter and Ahab, would have a direct bearing on whether or not the arrow would find its mark. If the archer were higher than Ahab, shooting from a hill, then gravity itself would help speed the arrow to its target. If Ahab were on the hill and the archer below him, or they were both on the same level, the elements of power, speed, timing and other factors mentioned above would the more come into play. Whatever the case, all these complex elements of physics must work together to bring about the predestined end result, the wounding of Ahab unto death.

16. However unlikely it might seem, there must be no collision of this particular arrow with any other arrow in flight, which would have deflected it from its deadly trajectory. Or—who knows what really happened that day?—if there were such a collision, it must be such that it would drive the arrow into the path necessary to meet Ahab between the joints of his harness.

17. Some idea must enter the mind of *this certain man* at the exact appointed time and move him to shoot his arrow, not at a particular target, but *at a venture*. But this venture must be in a certain direction, at a certain elevation, with a certain power, as before discussed.

18. This certain man must not be killed prematurely; he may have been killed or wounded later that day, but he must survive at least until he has fired this particular arrow.

THE RESULT

Elijah's prophecy was fulfilled, as was Micaiah's. Each incident that day, each delay, even the waiting

for Micaiah to be summoned, and how long he took to arrive in the king's presence; each was a contributing factor to get Ahab to the battlefield at the appointed time. He could not be too early or too late, or, all else being equal, he would have been out of place when the arrow was fired. All came together to put the arrow in the narrow joints of Ahab's armor. No archer could have so aimed and hit such a miniscule moving target at such a distance. The one who did it evidently never knew he was the one who wounded Ahab unto death. All came to pass to hit Ahab at the proper time, place, and angle, with the exact momentum, speed, power, and penetration, to produce a fatal wound yet so as not to cause an instant death. No armor, no bone could throw this arrow off course or stop it from its appointed path.

"And the battle increased that day: and the king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians, and died at even: and the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot (1 Kings 22.35)." So that Ahab would bleed slowly to death, each vein, artery, and capillary must be precisely cut, just so. No surgeon planned an operation with more precision than God did the death of Ahab. It must be a bloody death, because the dogs were predestinated to lick up his blood where they licked up the blood of Naboth.

"So the king died, and was brought to Samaria; and they buried the king in Samaria. And one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria; and the dogs licked up his blood; and they washed his armour; according unto the word of the Lord which he spake (1 Kings 22.37f)."

JEZEBEL

Elijah's prophecies of the deaths of Jezebel and of Ahab's sons were likewise precisely fulfilled. In due time, a prophet anointed a man named Jehu to be king over Israel, and as he did, he renewed the prophecy of God and of Elijah: "For the whole house of Ahab shall perish...And the dogs shall eat Jezebel in the portion of Jezreel, and there shall be none to bury her (2 Kings 9.8ff)." Jehu, in disposing of Ahab's descendents, killed Ahab's grandson, king Joram (also known as Jehoram) in 2 Kings 9.24. He then went to Jezreel, where he had Jezebel thrown from a window, and, as his horses trampled her, he proceeded to run over her with his chariot. Later, he sent servants to bury her. "And they went to bury her: but

they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands. Wherefore they came again, and told him. And he said, This is the word of the Lord, which he spake by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel: And the carcase of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel; so that they shall not say, This is Jezebel (2 Kings 9.35ff)."

AHAB'S SONS

The dogs did eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel, and Ahab's sons died horrible deaths, being beheaded by the very people who had raised them for him.

It came about in this manner. Jehu delivered an ultimatum to the city of Samaria, in effect telling the city fathers either to behead Ahab's sons and deliver their heads to him or expect to be destroyed. He told them to "...take ye the heads of the men your master's sons, and come to me to Jezreel by to morrow this time. Now the king's sons, being seventy persons, were with the great men of the city, which brought them up. And it came to pass, when the letter came to them, that they took the king's sons, and slew seventy persons, and put their heads in baskets, and sent him them to Jezreel. And there came a messenger, and told him, saying, They have brought the heads of the king's sons. And he said, Lay ye them in two heaps at the entering in of the gate until the morning (2 Kings 10.6ff)."

When he verified that these were indeed the heads of Ahab's sons, Jehu said, "**Know now that there shall fall unto the earth nothing of the word of the Lord, which the Lord spake concerning the house of Ahab: for the Lord hath done that which he spake by his servant Elijah (2 Kings 10.10).**" We may conclude, then, that the dogs or the fowls, or both, ate the mortal remains of these seventy wicked young men. Other than this, the Scriptures do not expressly verify Ahab's sons' being eaten by the dogs and fowls—"him that dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat; and him that dieth [of Ahab] in the field shall the fowls of the air eat." That is left for God's elect to believe by faith. To one who has been given to believe on this Sovereign God, and—as it were—to see Him in action in this account, and has been given to see the fulfillment of the dogs' licking up Ahab's blood and their eating Jezebel, there is no

doubt in the mind of faith as to what happened to Ahab's wicked descendants.

"So Jehu slew all that remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great men, and his kinsfolks, and his priests, until he left him none remaining (2 Kings 10.11)."

For now, we cannot pursue this subject further. Suffice it to say, God avenges the deaths of His saints, in this case the deaths of Naboth and his family, in a fearsome way. A woe is pronounced on those who even offend His little ones (Matthew 18.6); how much more on those who murder them? Whether God's little ones live, or they die at the hands of an Ahab, may the Lord bless them to see and to rejoice in His protecting power, providence, and predestination in all the affairs of this life and of the world to come.

If we are blessed to return to this subject, we would hope to yet be blessed to examine Ahab's promise of "a better vineyard" and the better vineyard which God has provided for His own.

—Elder C. C. Morris

GOOD NEWS FOR SINNERS

This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief (1 Timothy 1.15).

Paul wrote to the church at Rome and declared, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed, from faith to faith...(Romans 1.16,17)." The essence of the gospel of Christ is the statement given above.

"This is a faithful saying...." We have not followed cunningly devised fables in worshiping God through Jesus Christ. We do not speak things we have received of men. The ministers of the gospel of Christ are not taught this gospel by men, and they do not speak it with words which man's wisdom teaches. With plainness of speech they set forth that which they have received from Almighty God—a more sure

word of prophecy. The declaration "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" is a statement of an established fact, on which we may depend.

"...and worthy of all acceptance...." What the gospel is worthy of and what it receives are two different things. "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness (1 Corinthians 1.18)." The world does not recognize the power, beauty, and truth of the gospel. In fact, the children of this world are unable to receive this word of truth. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned (1 Corinthians 2.14)." However, it should be noted that the gospel is not offered to men to be accepted or rejected by them. The gospel message is a message of comfort and hope to the living children of God. It is the declaration of the finished work of Christ, which absolutely secured eternal life and all spiritual blessings to His people. Not one verse of scripture can be found to support the idea that Christ is offered to men or that men are to "accept" Him as their "personal savior." The only offering of Christ was his offering of Himself to the Father on behalf of His saints. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God (Hebrews 9.14)?" Regardless of how the gospel message is or is not received by others, it is eminently worthy of all acceptance by sinners who know the fear of God. "Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent (Acts 13.26)." Not only is the gospel worthy of all acceptance, the evidence is that the gospel finds acceptance in the hearts of those who are born of God. "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and *as many as* were ordained to eternal life believed (Acts 13.48)." According to the scripture, the ones who believed were exactly those who were ordained to eternal life. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But *as many as* received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of god, *even to them that believe* on his name: *Which were born*, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but *of God* (John 1.11-13)."

Those who “received Him”—that is, “believe on his name” are those “which *were* born...of God.” Those who receive Jesus Christ and the faithful saying of the gospel must first be born: 1) “not of blood”—it is not a person’s natural ancestry which prepares them to enter this kingdom which is “not of this world;” 2) “nor of the will of the flesh”—the natural man cannot beget spiritual life; 3) “nor of the will of man”—it is not by any external influence on the mind or will of a person; but 4) “of God.”

“...Christ Jesus came into the world...” The name “Christ” means “the anointed One.” It is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word, “Messiah.” In the Old Testament prophets, priests, and kings were anointed with oil to signify 1) their ordination to their positions, and 2) their dependence on the Spirit of God to enable them to serve acceptably. Many have been anointed, but the Lord Jesus is “the Christ”—the ultimate and fully anointed One of God. “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek... (Isaiah 61.1).” Again, John testified, “For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him (John 3.34).”

The name “Jesus” means “the Salvation of Jehovah.” How appropriate that the “holy thing” born of Mary should be so named. “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins (Matthew 1.21).” Our Lord Jesus Christ is the God-appointed, Spirit-Anointed Salvation of Jehovah. Peter spoke by inspiration of God when he said to our Lord, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matthew 16.16).”

This Christ Jesus “came into the world.” He is not of the world. He is the One by Whom the world and all things therein consist—the One Who upholds all things by the word of His power. He is the One Who created the whole in the beginning. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men (John 1.1-4).” The One who came into the world at the appointed time was none other than the Eternal

God Himself. This is a great mystery, but it is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh...(1 Timothy 3.16).” Christ Jesus came into this world at the time appointed of the Father to redeem His people and bring them into full possession of their inheritance in Him. “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons (Galatians 4.4,5).” John told us, “Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist...(1 John 4.3).” To deny the faithful saying that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners is to identify oneself as an antichrist.

“...to save sinners...” The Lord Christ came into this world on purpose. He had a charge to keep—a mission to fulfill. This charge was that given Him in the everlasting covenant of grace before the foundation of the world. It was that mission to which He agreed from everlasting. He came into this world to save sinners. The wording here is clear. Christ did not come to be a good example for us to follow. He did not come to be the paragon of prophets. He did not come to bring peace and prosperity to the world. His mission was salvation. The Arminian world claims that Christ came to do something to make salvation possible for all mankind. However, according to their view of things, the work Jesus Christ accomplished in the flesh did not absolutely secure the salvation of one soul. They also freely admit that the majority of the human race will never benefit one iota from the death of Jesus Christ—a death they claim was on behalf of the entire race. Jesus Christ did not come into this world to make salvation possible upon the fulfillment of certain conditions—He came into this world TO SAVE SINNERS. “For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day (John 6.38-40).”

Our Lord came to save. He came to save the ones given to Him by the Father. He came to lay down His life for His sheep. "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep... I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd (John 10.11, 14-16)." Being the good shepherd, he would never be satisfied if even one of His sheep should perish. He gave the parable of the shepherd who had ninety and nine sheep safe in the fold. The shepherd was not satisfied with 99% success. He left the sheep with a keeper and went out to find the lost sheep. He did not merely go to the top of the first hill and look around. No, He traveled through valleys, waded creeks, climbed rocks, and whatever was necessary to reach the lost and helpless sheep. He went to the sheep, laid it on his shoulders, and brought it back to the fold. Dear children of God, your Shepherd cannot be satisfied if even one of His sheep perishes away from the fold. The prophecy of Isaiah 53 guarantees He shall be satisfied. "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities (Isaiah 53.11)." Here it is. Christ either accomplished what He came here to do, or He did not. If He failed in one instance to utterly and eternally save one for whom He came, He would be a failure—a dissatisfied failure. The testimony of the gospel is that Christ is a complete and unequivocal success as a Savior. "Christ HATH redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us...(Galatians 3.13)." "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross: And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it (Colossians 2.13-15)."

"...of whom I am chief." Paul's expression of humility bears witness to the work of grace accomplished in his heart. Though Saul of Tarsus had once thought he had much in which to glory, grace

taught Paul to glory only in the cross of Christ and to esteem himself as "less than the least of all the saints." When we encounter the Eternal God in the Person of Jesus Christ we are abased before Him. It is not a matter of comparing ourselves with others. We don't care whether our sins are "bigger" than another's. Our sins loom large because they are our sins. We are before the "One with whom we have to do." It has always been thus. When God speaks, the creature, overcome by His holiness, puts his face in the dust and confesses his unworthiness. How brightly does the glory of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ sparkle against the black background of our wretchedness! May Almighty God establish our hearts in this gracious gospel. May He cause us to confess our vileness and unworthiness before His throne of grace. May He strip us of all confidence in anything outside of Jesus Christ. May He fill our hearts with praise to His wonderful name. May He cause us to stand fast against the wiles of Satan and his hosts, and to contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints.

—Elder Shannon Vaughn

217 Massey Street

Morrilton, AR 72110

E-mail: svaughn714@aol.com

A SPECIAL NOTICE CONCERNING OUR BOOKS

IN the past eighteen years, during which we have published and distributed a number of books worldwide, we have only had two complaints about blank or missing pages. For our satisfaction, that is two too many. Since we ship many books with the protective shrink wrap on them, it is impossible for us to examine them or to know if there is a problem before you receive your purchase.

If any books of ours are found to be defective in any way, please be sure we will replace them free of charge, including the postage both ways. It is a pleasure to publish good literature. We expect the purchaser to find reading it a pleasure also.

Please notify us at once if your book purchase is not what it should be. We will then do whatever is necessary to make it right. Thank you very much.

—The Publishers

JOHN 3.16 AND THE LITTLE WORD “SO”

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3.16).

INnumerable self-styled “evangelicals” throughout the world misread what they have tried to make into the world’s favorite text, John 3.16, as though it says, “*God loved the world.*” As they have so often done, they have invented another “scripture verse” that does not even exist. Nowhere in the Bible did anyone ever say God loved or loves the world, or say indiscriminately to a general audience, “God loves you.” God did not, nor did His prophets, nor His apostles, nor any other speaker or writer.

The word *so* is also in John 3.16, however; “God *so* loved the world....” *So*, the little word that is so often ignored, is one of the biggest words in the verse. Since “so” is a word, and all words mean something, then “so” means something. When a word is placed within a sentence, it modifies, changes or qualifies that sentence. In John 3.16, *so* modifies and qualifies the simple statement, “God loved the world.” Without that word *so* and what follows it, one would find God doing the very thing He told His children not to do when He said, “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him(1 John 2.15).”

According to the free-will theory, the act of proclaiming “God loves everybody” is supposed to glorify Him, show that He is infinitely good, and if anyone is “unsaved” (another term not found in the scriptures; the same people who made up the “God loved the world” verse have also coined the term *unsaved* to flesh out their system), it is not His fault but their own. In reality their proclamation, being a lie, dishonors the living and true God and would rob Him of the glory of His effectual, redeeming love and grace.

Untold thousands of Arminian pulpiteers daily repeating “God loved the world” merely earns a bored “Oh” from the unquestioning natural mind. The spiritual dullard, who would believe anything

that is comfortable to him, gladly soaks up this statement in his natural blindness and goes on to other things, feeling safe in his sin. Thus comforted in his wickedness, he is made to think, “God loves the world. Okay, then I am safe. God won’t be breathing down my neck; that’s one less thing I have to worry about.” “Such is the way of an adulterous woman; she eateth, and wipeth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness (Proverbs 30.20).” “God loves the world? Okay, then he loves you and me, I guess. What’s for lunch?” Such is the carnal mind’s appreciation for the love of its god.

I

To say God loves the world is at first satisfying to the natural mind, but it is vaguely frustrating to it. It sounds good on the surface but leaves one with the uneasy thought haunting the back of his mind, “What good does this love do, if God loves Pharaoh, Judas, Cain, and Esau, if that love either cannot or will not save them? What did the love of God ever do for them?”

Old Testament Israel in the days of the prophet Malachi was a case in point. The nation was told, “The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi. I have loved you, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us (Malachi 1.1f)?” The reader who has been following closely will remember what was said above: Nowhere in the Bible did anyone ever say God loved or loves the world, or say indiscriminately to a general audience, “God loves you.” Yet God here says, “I have loved you, saith the Lord.” Does this verse disprove what we have said? No. God directed this statement specifically to *Israel* and not to the entire race of Adam.

When love is generalized to include all, it loses its potency and its very appeal. To love everything equally is to love nothing. Love becomes too diluted to mean anything. To love someone means that the loved one is someone special. To love everyone would mean that everyone is special, which means that no one is special; for, by definition, “special” must separate someone or something out of a general group. For example, we speak of loving our country, meaning that our country is something preeminent to us, more than other countries; or, a man loves his wife, which says his wife is peculiarly

precious to him, more dear to him than all other women.

Now, if a person loves all countries or all women equally, then must he not admit that his own country and his own wife are nothing special to him? If someone says he “loves all the cities of England equally,” is he not saying by those very words that London is nothing special to him?

Husbands, if you knew that your wife loved all men equally and without reservation, would that be a major comfort to you? Would you glory in her universal love and praise her for it?

Wives, would you praise and glorify your husband for his love if you knew he loved every woman in the world “equally and without discrimination”? But that is exactly what He would be required to do, *if* God in Christ loved everyone equally; because your husband is admonished, “Husbands, love your wives, **even as** Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish (Ephesians 5.25ff).”

The misleading proclamation that “God loves everyone without exception” is a designing, scheming lie. Bluntly, it is a contrivance based on a crude, carrot-and-stick psychology, designed to make people feel obligated toward God. It is a subtle theory, not too well thought out by the men and devils who developed it; but they did so with a hope that it would produce within mankind a response of gratitude, service, obedience and devotion toward this god who loves them. It is a crafty system which in theory is supposed to bring the maximum number of the citizens of this world to feel and to say, “God loves me? Then, I must love and serve him in return! I must feel gratitude for his love, and, I shall obey all of his laws forever to repay him for it.”

In actual application, however, their theory does not particularly move the believers in this universal love toward obedient service. Instead, they are ultimately reduced to looking about themselves at the “mess” in which they perceive the world to be and mulling over the ineffectuality of this vague, universal love which does nothing special for anyone in particular.

They proclaim a yearning god who is as helplessly concerned over a Pharaoh or a Judas as he is a Moses, Peter, James, or John, a god who can do nothing for any of them unless they let him. According to the free-will approach, the primary difference between the apostates and the apostles is that the former would not avail themselves of his love while the latter would and did; so, this god continues to yearn and mourn over his losses and failures while ever offering more love, more love.

Musing upon his god’s lavish waste of this love upon the atheistic, hellish hordes around him, the same love that he “offers” to his most faithful saint, the thoughtful Arminian must cynically say in his heart, “Wherein hast thou loved us?”

Whenever the statement “God loves you” comes to an entire class, as on the surface of things it seemed to come to all of national Israel in Malachi 1.2, the natural response from the “universally loved” ones will be identical to that of Israel’s leadership. It was not undying gratitude, willing service and obedience, or total devotion and love to God in return, as the Arminian theory would lead us to expect. Instead, the undiscerning mind responds, “Wherein hast thou loved us?” Whenever love is generalized, diffused, scattered everywhere and made as common as straw, it becomes as cheap as straw in the estimation of the “beloved” one(s). Malachi implies that the religious leaders of his day were saying, “What distinguishing marks prove you love us more than you love anyone else? Just what have you done for us lately?”

It is of vital interest to the child of grace that God Himself answers the question in Malachi by directly proclaiming His sovereign election of Israel. The thrust of God’s reply is, Jacob is elect, Esau is not; *that* is wherein I have loved you. Election in Christ Jesus to the eternal salvation which is in and through His blood—that is the cardinal proof of God’s love; conversely, without divine election there is no proof of divine love. The truths go together. It is impossible to name one person whom God loved but did not also choose, redeem, and save, or to name one chosen, redeemed, saved individual who was not loved. They are one and the same, and these terms are interchangeable when applied to God’s people.

Yet, for years the Arminians have misused John 3.16 to preach around the truth of God’s sovereign

election without directly having to confront it or even having to mention it, as though election were the enemy of divine love. Perceiving election as an enemy, they have—like the ostrich's hiding its head in the sand—ignored it, hoping it would go away. Election has not gone away, nor will it; and the theory that God loves the world is weighed in the balance and found wanting.

II

“God loved the world.” This is the Arminian's blanket, unscriptural declaration. On the other hand, to say that “God *so* loved the world....” as Jesus did, is entirely different from saying “God loved the world.” *So* is a qualifying word. Inserting *so* in the complete sentence “God loved the world” gives us “God *so* loved the world,” which is no longer a complete sentence—but it is the way Jesus said it. To say “God *so* loved the world” immediately raises the valid question: How, or in what manner did He love it—how *so*? This leads us to the fact that Jesus both anticipated and answered this question when He continued, “...that He gave....”

His continuation and explanation to Nicodemus would indicate that perhaps we are on the right track, in that He did not say, “God loved the world, *period*.” He said, “For God *SO* loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son,” but He did not stop with that revelation, either. “He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Here Jesus sets forth a fact about believers. He did not tell Nicodemus how to believe or urge him to do so. It remained for Paul to point out that our belief in Him, like the only begotten Son Himself, is also a gift (Philippians 1.29), and that all who believe in Him do so “according to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead...(Ephesians 1.19-22).”

Paul's doctrine is that it takes the same power of God to bring a poor sinner out of natural unbelief into a state of belief as it took to raise Christ from the dead and exalt Him in glory at His Father's side. It takes that same power to make a believer out of an unbeliever. But, in John 3, Jesus did not go into these things with Nicodemus. He told Nicodemus how God loved the world so that believers would not perish, and he indicated that belief is *evidence* of

eternal life—not one of several commanded steps toward eternal life.

Nowhere in the third chapter of John is there any indication that the love of God does anything for an unbeliever. Nowhere does it say that any unbeliever, *per se*, is loved. The unbeliever is condemned already (verse 18) and shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth, or stays continually, on him (verse 36). This is unchangeable, unalterable, abiding. It is true in time and is true in eternity. The evidence that the unbeliever is condemned is that he loves darkness, hates the light (Christ, John 8.12), and will not come to Him lest his deeds should be re-proved (3.20). In contrast to this, another evidence of eternal life in the believer is that he does come to the light that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are *wrought in God*, which is another way of saying their deeds are literally produced by God (John 3.21, Philippians 2.13).

The world thinks it is doing God a service by attempting to make His love as broad as possible. John well answered all who believe such when he said, “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” If Christ is not the propitiation for an individual's sins, there is no proof whatsoever that God loves him. If Christ is his propitiation, then this proves that God does love him. God's love, The Father's election, the Son's propitiation, the Spirit's regeneration, and the resulting belief in the individual's heart—these are all to the exact, same extent.

The error of the world is: “God loved the world; God gave His only begotten Son; **if** you will believe in Him, then you will not perish but have everlasting life.”

But ye have not so learned Christ.

The doctrine of Christ is: God has a people, and God loves His own; “...having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end (John 13.1).” He gave His only begotten Son **for** them, He gives their belief in Him **to** them, He works their deeds **in** them. Therefore they believe in Him, and they shall not perish but have everlasting life. His people rest in His eternal, unchangeable, specific, and effectual love. A renewed heart, belief in the Lord Jesus Christ, and a changed life are the results and evidences of God's love in anyone's life.

In summary, this is how God *so* loved the world. It can be truly said that the inner hope of God's sovereign, electing love, when it is implanted by the Holy Spirit in an enlightened sinner's heart, will produce in him or her that genuine gratitude, obedience and devotion about which the will-worshippers of this world can only speculate when they are in their finer moods, and which they try to imitate when they are on what they consider to be their better behavior.

—Elder C. C. Morris

FORTHCOMING BOOK: THE WRITINGS OF ELDER SAMUEL TROTT

IN the next issue of *The Remnant* we will give full particulars on a new book, *The Works of Elder Samuel Trott*. These writings have been gleaned from the old *Signs of the Times*, 1832-1866.

Elder Trott was the moving force behind "The Black Rock Address," being its author. He was, as well, the most frequent contributor to the pages of the *Signs of the Times* in its formative years. His writings are a rich source of information and beliefs of the Old School Baptists of the period. Probably no man, including Elder Beebe, had as much influence on the early Old School churches as did Elder Trott.

Our early estimate is that the book of Elder Trott's writings will be about the same size as one of the volumes of Beebe's Editorials. Pricing will be similar. We urge our brethren to support this valuable work. The book will be published by Welsh Tract Publications and sales will go toward the publishing of *The Remnant* and other future works.

—Elder James F Poole

AND ANOTHER NOTE ON BOOKS

WE have less than 200 copies of Cleve Brantley's book, "The Tie That Binds," and "A Second Feast" is down to about the same number.

—JFP

PSALM 115.1-3

Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake. Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is now their God? But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.

GLORY belongs exclusively to the name of the Lord. His saints would not have it any other way. The Psalmist says it is so for two reasons: (1) for His mercy and (2) for His truth's sake.

The glory belongs to the name of the Lord, that is, the Lord **Jesus** Christ. This very name attracts our attention; it is plainly defined on the first page of the New Testament: "...thou shalt call His name **JESUS**: for He shall save His people from their sins."

From this we learn He has a people; hence, they are called *His*. They were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world, blessed with all spiritual blessings in Him, that they should be holy and without blame before Him. They were ordained unto eternal life, and as many as were ordained unto eternal life believed (Acts 13.48). They were predestinated unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made them accepted in the Beloved, who is none other than God's beloved Son. They are predestinated to be conformed to His image, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. They are elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, with grace and peace multiplied unto them.

None of this is apart from God's mercy. Mercy implies deliverance when it cannot be expected or demanded. A condemned criminal does not demand mercy; he begs for it. It is not something to which anyone has a right.

This deliverance-mercy is by redemption and ransom, provided in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ by the God who has been offended. All of the Old Testament figures and shadows point to this fact: God Himself made the way of escape for His people. "God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering (Genesis 22.8)."

—CCM

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 TRIAL OF JOB

Elder Silas Durand

F grade library buckram cover, 248 pages

1 copy - \$14.00 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 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.