

# The Remnant

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

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## PREDESTINATION FROM GENESIS TO REVELATION

No. 21  
1 KINGS

### THE END OF SOLOMON’S REIGN; JEROBOAM, AND REHOBOAM, THE FIRST KINGS OF A DIVIDED ISRAEL

**A**n appropriate beginning for this chapter in predestination is a brief quotation from our No.20 in this series:

“Forces were being forged into alliances. Opposition was building even while Solomon was growing in power. The very instruments Solomon used to bring power and fame to himself and Israel were the same instruments that drove a wedge between the twelve tribes; particularly the levies and the forced servitude employed in the building of the houses of Solomon, including the temple.”

And so it was. Solomon grew older and wiser. He also grew an appetite for the idol gods of his many wives, 1 Kings 11.8. How could this be? Had Solomon kicked over the traces? Reader, one only has to examine within to learn the secret of personal iniquity and lust. Perhaps it is far more widespread in ourselves than most may care to admit. Even so, Solomon’s path would, without fail, lead to a permanent rupture among the twelve tribes of Israel. Lest any have a sudden outbreak of Arminian reasoning in this regard, remember 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).” Since that was written nearly 400 years after Solomon, we hardly think the prophet would except the regal king in this sweeping statement. God was fully in control! The way of this man, Solomon, was not in himself either.

### SOLOMON’S ADVERSARIES

#### Hadad

Before examining the account of Rehoboam, Solomon’s successor and son, and Jeroboam, king of the ten northern tribes, notice must be given to several whom God raised up as adversaries *unto* beloved Solomon. Should the reason be asked why, let us say, it establishes in greater detail the complete control God wielded over the lives of all those who were contemporaries with Solomon, especially those involved in his decline. “And the Lord stirred up an adversary unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite: he was of the king’s seed in Edom (1 Kings 11.14).” Harken, you who despise predestination! Was our great Jehovah merely a spectator in the rise of this adversary, Hadad? Certainly not! No amount of rage or malice will obviate the truth; God not only had a will in the matter, He *stirred up* Hadad. Hadad was a fugitive from the sword of Joab during the reign of David, Solomon’s father. As an Edomite youth he, among others, fled to Egypt to avoid the vengeance of David’s decree which would certainly bring an end to theirs lives. In this strange episode, Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, gave them sanctuary, a house, and

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appointed Hadad victuals and land. Why would this Egyptian king show favor to a youthful castaway from the families of Esau? We can only say, "Even so Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." More amazing than all this, Pharaoh extended an even more lavish favor to Hadad the Edomite. "And Hadad found great favour in the sight of Pharaoh, so that he gave him to wife the sister of his own wife, the sister of Tahpenes the queen (1 Kings 11.19f)." What more could Hadad have desired? From appearance he was set for life. Luxury, fame, prominence and security. This was about the best this earth could offer. However, intelligence came to the ears of Hadad which aroused smoldering passions. "And when Hadad heard in Egypt that David slept with his

fathers, and that Joab the captain of the host was dead, Hadad said to Pharaoh, Let me depart, that I may go to mine own country (1 Kings 11.21)." This is no isolated incident in the affairs of humanity. It is all too common. Here was a man with everything, yet he felt compelled to throw it all away to nurse a burning grudge. But wait! Remember; God stirred up this adversary. After all the wrangling and disputing we still come to this: God directed this affair to fulfill His eternal purpose. Those children of the Heavenly King who find solace in God's sovereignty ascribe the incident to absolute predestination. Arminians, however, take refuge in sophistry and double talk, which is but a wall daubed with untempered mortar.

Pharaoh observed this animosity fuming forth from Hadad as extremely strange. "Then Pharaoh said unto him, But what hast thou lacked with me, that, behold, thou seekest to go to thine own country?" Pharaoh reasoned, but not even compelling arguments from this great monarch could dissuade Hadad. "And he answered, Nothing: howbeit let me go in any wise (1 Kings 11.22)." Hear his response! Nothing! A voice had appealed to Hadad from the very throne of Egypt but it was powerless against the will of the Sovereign of the universe. God had stirred up an adversary, Hadad, and no enticements nor allurements could bend this resolute rod, for God raised him up for this specific purpose, to chastise Solomon. We are not informed just what activities Hadad engaged in towards Solomon beyond it being called "mischief" (1 Kings 11.25).

It is interesting to note that Hadad asks of Pharaoh to "let me go in any wise." Pharaoh was as helpless to retain Hadad as a previous Pharaoh was to keep the Hebrew children from crossing the Red Sea to freedom. Both the Hebrews and Hadad had been stirred by the declaration of God's will, and go they must; each for their respective purpose. The Hebrews returned to Canaan freed from bondage and Hadad returned to mischief.

Since God stirred up Hadad for this particular purpose who dares say Hadad could have acted any different than what he did? And why not? Did not the great Jehovah have a plan worthy of Himself in all this? If He did not then we poor creatures are in desperate straits indeed, for free will reigns rather than the eternal councils. Hadad would be a mischief

maker as sure as God was on His throne. And the historical facts are that Hadad did exactly what God stirred him up to do. Was God's holiness violated by Hadad fulfilling the eternal purpose? We can only pity the soul that thinks so.

### Rezon

"And God stirred him up another adversary, Rezon the son of Eliadah, which fled from his lord Hadadezer king of Zobah (1 Kings 11.23)." It appears that Rezon broke away from Hadadezer his king and established himself as captain over a following of men of like passions. He ultimately became king over Syria and devoted much energy pestering Solomon so long as he lived. As Hadad the Edomite troubled Judah from the South it seems Rezon did the same from the North, thus inflicting considerable grief on Solomon.

What shall be said then of these troublers? This much can be said: they were both stirred by none other than God for purposes that seemed good in His sight. Can it be thought that the Scripture, "The way of the transgressor is hard," would afford Solomon an exemption due to his station in Israel? God did indeed raise up and stir these two troublers in Israel and we are persuaded it was for wise purposes determined from eternity past.

There are many Hadads and Rezon's affecting the lives of the elect family. Some seem to do so justly and some unjustly but all do so within the framework of God's absolute predestination.

### Jeroboam

Third, but certainly the more conspicuous among the inveterate foes of Solomon, was Jeroboam. Hadad and Rezon may have been particularly pesky as adversaries of Solomon but Jeroboam was raised up by God and proclaimed by the prophet Ahijah to be successor to ten of the tribes of Israel. An unending division ruptured the families descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob with Jeroboam being the first of a long line of wicked kings to rule over them. Thus, Jeroboam figures prominently in the plan God ordained in eternity past for the course of the twelve tribes.

At this juncture we pause to ask a simple question of those who believe God only controls good things but not those things which are considered (by human

logic) evil or sinful: according to your line of thinking, how much control did God, the creator of the heavens and earth, possess at the time of Solomon, Hadad, Rezon, Jeroboam and the host of other Israelites who had gone whoring after the gods and idols of the nations about them? To repeat, how much control did God have? If our God only rules and determines events thought sanitary by us, and has no direct involvement in the unsanitary deeds of His creation, is He not, by such blasphemous reasoning, practically in retirement from the affairs of this world? To disassociate God from all the events of time and eternity that are not pure and holy would be the equivalent of saying He has either lost control or never had it in the first place.

Some would dodge the above conclusion by saying God has a secret will and a revealed will, or that God *permits* sin while not ordaining its execution. That is, at best, ludicrous, and at worst, infidelity. For our part, we rejoice in this truth, from everlasting, God did determine *all* events of *all* time and they are *all* as sure as His throne. If it might be asked if we understand it all, we would, without hesitation, say no, and yet at the same time take great comfort in believing it to be so.

The rise and conduct of Jeroboam is an extremely interesting subject. However, only that portion of his life which relates to Solomon will be considered. Jeroboam's name seems to mean, *the people contend*, or *he pleads the cause of the people*. Whatever, he certainly was a dominant figure of the period. Jeroboam was the son of a servant of Solomon, Nebat, an Ephraimite. His mother's name was Zeruah, a widow. Some ancient manuscripts say she was a *porne*, or harlot.

Jeroboam's antagonism toward Solomon follows a familiar path, one frequently seen in the Scriptures. "And the man Jeroboam was a mighty man of valour: and Solomon seeing the young man that he was industrious, he made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph (1 Kings 11.28)." Was it a quirk of genetic formation passed on from his parents that produced this mighty valour? Or could it rather be the conferred character from God? Moreover, there were frequently conspicuous men of valour in those days. Why then single out this Jeroboam? Was it chance, luck, a simple fortuitous happening? Solomon was a wise man; a skilled man; far above even the

wisest of other men. He excelled in the study of human nature. Could it have been a miscalculation by Solomon which led him to station Jeroboam in such a prominent position? No! The divine record indicates the will of God was the determinant factor in Jeroboam's rise to power and influence among the people.

There are many champions and brave leaders of various causes. Some succeed; some fail. What or who makes them to be different? In the case of Jeroboam there can be no question. God sent His prophet Ahijah with tidings from heaven. God determined the course of Jeroboam.

Jeroboam proudly clothed himself in a new garment, apparently befitting his new position. "And Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him, and rent it in twelve pieces. And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces: for thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee (1 Kings 11.30,31ff)." This episode leads us to ponder a fundamental position derived from Scriptures. Since God sent His prophet to Jeroboam with specific instructions, then it must have been the will of God for matters to come to pass exactly as described. Thus, His will being as eternal as Himself, the incident, together with all corresponding events, was predestinated. Yes, blessed predestination! Who shall dare assume God only *wished* or *hoped* matters would fall out as prescribed by His prophet Ahijah? Listen once again. This is the voice of eternal purpose: "*For thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel.*" That expression will satisfy all but the most hardened Arminians. God intended matters to be as Ahijah spoke them, and so they were.

From 1 Kings 11.33 to 39, we find the catalog of reasons for assigning Jeroboam to prominence and the rending of ten tribes from Solomon and his seed. Those sins, however do not change the truth of eternal purpose. All God's works are eternally known by Him and what He does is done forever, meaning, He had determined beforehand, even from eternity, what He would do regarding Solomon's fall from integrity. May His name be praised that our times, like Solomon's, are in His hands.

"Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam, And Jeroboam arose, and fled into Egypt, unto Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of

Solomon (1 Kings 11.40)." What dreadful conduct! Solomon, in many respects a splendid type or figure of Christ, clutched in his breast a murderous passion toward the very man whom God raised up to lift his hand against him. "Verily, every man at his best estate is altogether vanity (Psalm 39.5)." "Solomon sought!" Note well, Solomon contemplated the murder of one of his brethren. If the ignited emotion of this corrupted king of Israel had given free expression, Jeroboam would have been a corpse within hours of the desired deed.

Solomon, with all his wisdom, might, influence, and determination yet could not sustain the destruction of Jeroboam, for, as our text from the previous article stated, "*This thing is from me*" was the word of Jehovah relative to the impending division of the twelve tribes. Surely the potter had molded the clay; each for its respective purpose. Solomon would fail in his nefarious plot. Jeroboam would flee to Egypt for security.

Solomon died after serving Israel forty years (1 Kings 11.42). Now, after 120 years under three kings, Saul, David, and Solomon, Israel was really, externally at least, no better served, and considerably worse, for their tenure as a monarchy. What a striking lesson for the saints of God today; "Our kingdom is not of this world," for surely, if it is, we are in worse straits than Israel was then.

Solomon was dead. Jeroboam, anointed of God to rule the ten Northern tribes was in Egypt, and Rehoboam, Solomon's arrogant son, reigned in his stead. "There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt. But those riches perish by evil travail: and he begetteth a son, and there is nothing in his hand (Ecclesiastes 5.13,14)." Perhaps Solomon had prophesied against himself unwittingly.

## THE REIGNS OF JEROBOAM AND REHOBOAM.

"But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and will give it unto thee, even ten tribes (1 Kings 11.35)." Jehovah had spoken thus by the mouth of Ahijah. This is a visible and most certain example of God having declared the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46.10). There were no contingencies, no variables. God had spoken. And so it came to pass. How beautiful to the little sheep who rejoice in

sovereign grace. Amidst all the turmoil and confusion in the camps of Israel; despite the determination of Solomon to slay Jeroboam; Jeroboam fleeing to Egypt for fear; idolatry rampant; even revolt among the tribes, God was bringing to pass His eternal purposes to preserve Himself a remnant (Romans 11.5) and maintain the royal seed line of David (Romans 1.2,3) until His only begotten Son would sit on the throne according to the everlasting covenant (Acts 2.29-31).

The reader will be well served here to take notice that Solomon is not accorded the prominence in the New Testament his ancestors received. Especially noteworthy is the omission of Solomon from the catalog of the faithful in Hebrews, chapter eleven. Rahab, a harlot, is listed. Samson, a suicide, is mentioned. Jephthah, who evoked an awful vow upon his daughter, is found, but not Solomon. David, Samuel, and the prophets close out the list. Surely, there is a lesson for us in these circumstances.

“And Rehoboam went to Shechem: for all Israel were come to Shechem to make him king (1 Kings 12.1).” This is but one more vivid illustration of the folly of man. The accepted opinion in Israel was to install Rehoboam king over all Israel, but God had before determined, and moreover, vocalized through Ahijah the prophet, that ten tribes would follow Jeroboam, not Rehoboam. “*For this thing is from me*” once again comes to mind, focusing our attention on the determinate counsel of God. What would come of the message from Jehovah to Jeroboam if the people had succeeded in bringing Rehoboam to the throne? To the blessed eye of the living children it is clear as the sea of glass, all events must be absolutely controlled by God, or chaos must ensue. Had all Israel gained their objective to bring Solomon’s son permanently to the throne, the message of God through Ahijah would be little more than a suggestion.

Jeroboam was recalled from Egypt to address Rehoboam, much as his name indicated, “the people contend.” Their petition to the new king was simple. It made common sense. Young kings are, however, often void of common sense and Rehoboam was no exception. “Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee (1 Kings 12.4).” On the response of young king Rehoboam hangs the heart

of our whole thesis in this series of articles. If, as Arminians contend, man is free to act as he will, the new king might just as well respond affirmatively as negatively and nothing outside of himself could violate his volition.

We know what Jehovah had exclaimed. “This thing is from me!” God had already determined that Jeroboam would rule over ten tribes, thus we are compelled to believe that, despite all the hoopla for free will, nothing would take place to force matters to come to pass contrary to God’s determination, also called absolute predestination.

Let work mongers the world over engage to uncover a scrap of evidence to fortify their absurd notion of free will, especially as it may relate to this episode. Rehoboam was *not* going to respond favorably to Israel’s pleas. As his father Solomon had written earlier, “The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord (Proverbs 16.33).” God had declared His purpose for Israel. The outcome was as sure as the rising of the sun. “For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? And his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back (Isaiah 14.27)?”

Rehoboam could sooner tear God from the throne than he could conjure up sentiments favorable to the pleas of Jeroboam and Israel that he loosen the oppressive yoke his father Solomon had put upon them.

### CONFLICTING COUNSEL

From the beginning we have attempted to show that God would, for reasons worthy of Himself, divide the twelve tribes, leaving the Northern tribes to apostasy and preserving the seed through which the Christ would be born from the tribe of Judah. Following is the record of how the division took place:

Jeroboam had been determined by Jehovah to lead off the ten tribes of the North (1 Kings 11.29-32). Upon the death of Solomon, Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead (1 Kings 11.43). At the first, all Israel came to Shechem to make Rehoboam king (1 Kings 12.1). At the same time they summoned Jeroboam from Egypt to petition Rehoboam, appealing to the young king for a reversal from the rigors Solomon had enacted. Their appeal was straightforward. “Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy

yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee (1 Kings 12.4).” Rehoboam’s response to Israel’s petition exhibits from the commencement he had substantial character flaws. “And he said unto them, Depart yet for three days, then come again to me. And the people departed (1 Kings 12.5).” The time (Ecclesiastes 3.8) for confrontation was at hand. Rehoboam first sought out the counsel of the old men that stood with Solomon his father. Accordingly, they recommended he speak good to Israel, assuring they would be his servants for ever (1 Kings 12.6,7). “But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him (1 Kings 12.8ff).”

“Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child, and thy princes eat in the morning (Ecclesiastes 10.16)!” Surely a weighty woe was about to fall upon Israel. The young men who grew up with Rehoboam afforded him no good counsel yet their words were adopted by the young king. “Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge (Proverbs 19.27).”

Rehoboam had heard counsel representing opposite points of view. On the one hand, the old men who stood with Solomon encouraged Rehoboam to deal kindly with the legitimate appeals of the Israelites. Opposing views were urged by his fellows, no doubt as unstable as himself. Could the matter then fall out one way as well as the other? Wisdom and wise counsel emanated from the peace party; folly and brazenness best describes the counsel of the contemporaries of Rehoboam. How would the issue evolve? “There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the Lord (Proverbs 21.30).” God alone would decide the outcome! So has it ever been and ever shall be.

“The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will (Proverbs 21.1).” This newly established king was certainly no exception to the text. Even though the request of Israel was noble; even though the counsel of the young men was wicked; all things were to be determined by the will of God alone. Those determinations were forged in eternity and we are today blessed to know them as the absolute predestination of all things. How happy those who find comfort and consolation therein!

Israel was soon to be divided forever. Ten tribes to the north; two tribes to the south. The trigger which would touch off the rupture was a seemingly simple decision to be made by the new king, Rehoboam. A simple decision, but would he follow the counsel of the older and wiser advisers? Or, would he rather stoop to his carnal instincts, primed to the full with egotism and pride, and acquiesce to the urgings of his rowdy associates, obviously vile as himself? A question, perhaps of far more importance is, was this his decision to make? To the law and the testimony: “The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord (Proverbs 16.1).” Those blessed to trust God and His word believe just what the text informs us. God prepared Rehoboam’s heart for this occasion and gave his tongue the answer to Israel’s petition. Both were *from the Lord!* May we be humbly submissive to this comforting truth. So the die was cast. “And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions (1 Kings 12.11).” Reader, be not hasty in assessing the matter. Yes, Rehoboam acted in a most cruel and pompous manner. His conduct fully impeaches his credentials as a fit king. Nevertheless, we see behind the impulsive behavior of Rehoboam the authority of a higher king; a King Whose authority is never repulsed. “Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people; for the cause was from the Lord, that he might perform his saying, which the Lord spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat (1 Kings 12.15).” ***For the cause was from the Lord!*** Yes, our God, Who ruleth in heaven and earth, is the first cause of all causes. And, to repeat once again from our previous text, “For this thing is from me.”

## SUMMARY

As was the case many times in centuries past, God rejected some on one hand and preserved some on the other hand. The scope of attention from the division of Israel forward would be on Judah, from which would come the Messiah. Once again, the pivotal point determining the course of events evolved from actions practically everyone would consider contrary to good conduct. Rehoboam followed the path of carnal reasoning and thus the unity of Israel was destroyed. We believe, however, that the evidence

is unmistakable; God had purposed matters to come to pass as they did. So, what shall we say? “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out (Romans 11.33)!” God had judged according to His wisdom and knowledge. He issued His eternal directives. Israel was divided. Can we fully understand? “For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counsellor (Romans 11.34)?”

Though we give leave to the subject for now, sobered by the thought that both Jeroboam and Rehoboam were instruments in the hand of God to bring to pass His eternal purposes, we call to mind finally, “For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen (Romans 11.36).”

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## THE WRETCHED MAN DELIVERED

*O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death (Romans 7.24)?*

**W**ho wants to be wretched? Who would volunteer to be wretched? The natural mind of man recoils at the prospect of life-long wretchedness. We think the race is to the swift and the battle to the strong, but our Lord says the first shall be last and the last shall be first. According to our Lord’s foreordination, the wretched—and only the wretched—shall be delivered.

This text is the lamentation of Paul, the apostle of Jesus Christ. These words are not, as some might expect, the words of an alienated, dead sinner. They do not describe the experience of one who has never tasted that the Lord is gracious. This confession of wretchedness is not for neophytes in the gospel, who can expect to “grow in grace” to a state beyond

wretchedness. This is the confession of the mature, divinely called, grace-anointed apostle to the Gentiles, the one who was blessed to pen the majority of the New Testament.

Paul felt and acknowledged his wretchedness. I am persuaded that all who are taught in the same school as the apostle will also feel and acknowledge their wretchedness. If one does not confess himself to be wretched he cannot be said to hold the same doctrine as the apostle. Without this confession one cannot preach the same gospel that Paul preached. If one does not preach that same gospel we should not receive him, but, rather, let him be accursed. Paul warned the churches of Galatia, “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed (Galatians 1.6-9).”

The word translated “wretched” in the New Testament means “to bear a weight, to endure a trial, miserable.” The weight the children of God bear is this miserable body of sin and death—the “old man” which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts. The trial they endure is the whole of their experience in this world. It is the trial of their faith as they walk by faith and not by sight. The misery they feel is the constant conflict between the flesh and the spirit. In the spirit they hunger and thirst for righteousness and seek the kingdom of God. Yet they experience a perpetual short-falling due to the flesh, the body of death, in which they dwell. They have the treasure of spiritual life, of Christ in them, the hope of glory, of the light of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus. They have this treasure, but they have it in an earthen vessel.

This is a felt wretchedness. It is an oppressive wretchedness. You can feel the pain, the misery, and the frustration as Paul exclaims, “O wretched man that I am!” Anyone with a little superficial Bible knowledge in the brain can confess himself to be a sinner. Thousands confess it daily with no pain and no feeling sense of the plague of the sin they confess.

Only those who have been quickened by the Spirit of God, who have tasted that the Lord is gracious can feel the pain and the shame of their wretchedness or smell the stench of the body of death in which they dwell.

It is a chronic wretchedness. It is a condition which lasts as long as we live in corruptible, mortal flesh. The text states, "O wretched man that I am!" The wretchedness was not in the past tense for the apostle, and it will not be in the past tense for any of the living family of God until their change comes. Job declared, "all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come (Job 14.14)."

There are those who advocate a progressive sanctification of the flesh. They believe that by diligence in using what they call "the means of grace" we can become better and better until the wretchedness of which Paul complained is a thing of the past. The popular religion of this age promises a "spirit-filled life of victory" which is available to all who will "surrender to the Lord" and "let God have His way" in their lives. The scripture speaks of these in clear words. "For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption (2 Peter 2.18-19)."

Don't misunderstand. There is victory for the child of God. The Lord's people are overcomers and more than conquerors through Him that loved us. "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith (1 John 5.4)." Our victory is a victory of faith which pertains to the new man, but it does not eradicate the flesh or the conflict between the old man and the new man.

Is this the end of it? Is this all there is? No! This wretchedness is one from which we must be delivered. The text says, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" We cannot deliver ourselves, but there is One, who not only can, but "who shall" deliver His people. We walk in the flesh, but we do not war after the flesh. The weapons of our warfare are mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. We may reside in the earth, but "our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven; from whence

also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself (Philippians 3.20-21)."

The child of grace must war against the flesh and groan under the burden of corruption from the moment he is quickened to the moment he puts off this body. When we breathe out our last breath the spirit enters into the presence of the Lord and the body returns to dust. And, yet, there is still an appointed day for the consummation of our salvation. "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord (1 Corinthians 15.51-58)."

Jesus Christ is the Deliverer. He is the Savior. He is our Life, our Righteousness, our Sanctification, and our Redemption. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. He is the Author and the Finisher of our faith. May we be blessed to look to Him in all our trials. May we rejoice in Him and have no confidence in the flesh. May we look for His appearing, and when that glorious day arrives, may it be our happy lot to appear with Him in glory.

Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? The Lord Jesus Christ shall.

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## REGENERATION WITHOUT MEANS

### PART II

#### CORNELIUS (Continued from last issue)

**C**ornelius was *A devout man...which gave much alms to the people...*(Acts 10.1ff). Some religionists have said that Cornelius' devotion to God was merely the attempt of an unsaved man, before he heard the gospel, to earn salvation from God. If this were so, then why did God say to him, "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God (verse 4)"? The principle that applies here, as Paul gave it to the Roman saints, is this: "That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be *acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost* (Romans 15.16)."

Whatever offering is acceptable to God is made so by the sanctification of the Holy Spirit. Nor were the alms of Cornelius, or your alms, or mine, or anyone else's, made acceptable unto God separate and apart from the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up *spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ* (1 Peter 2.5)."

Cornelius was one whom our God had blessed "with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love (Ephesians 1.3f)."

This Roman Centurion was "predestinated unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will," and "made **accepted** in the beloved," in whom he had "redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace (Ephesians 1.4-7)." He had every gift and grace, for time and for eternity, credited to his account before the advent of time by the will and absolute predestination of God. He was born of God and worshiped Him—the text says he worshiped God—before he ever met the apostle Peter. Jesus said, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth (John 4.24)." Cornelius worshiped God in Spirit and was yet to worship Him in truth because of the Lord's predestinating grace.

Cornelius had "obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will (Ephesians 1.11)." God wrought this eternal inheritance in his experience, as recorded in Acts 10. Later, when Peter preached Christ to him and his household, Cornelius trusted and believed in Him, which is the scriptural order for those born from above: "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise (Ephesians 1.13)."

A man whom God had taught, whom Jesus had healed from a lifetime of blindness, although he did not even know Jesus' name, said: "Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth (John 9.31)." In so saying, this formerly blind beggar described the exact case of Cornelius.

As the men Cornelius sent approached Joppa, the Lord was giving the apostle Peter a vision, telling him, "What God *hath* cleansed [and not, "What God *will* cleanse when the preacher comes"], that call not thou common." With this and what followed, Peter was given to understand God's order to eat the "unclean" animals in the vision symbolically meant, as he later explained, "God hath shewed me that I should not call *any man* common or unclean (Acts 10.28)."

The saints are not to judge any person as being "unsaved" or "lost" (as the Arminians and the gospel regenerationists do) just because he is "a foreigner" who has never heard the gospel preached in its purity. Peter told Cornelius, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, **is accepted** with him (verses 34-35)." Note well that:

(1) In every nation there are at present those who fear God and work righteousness. Must religionists be so self-satisfied as to think that, until they come along and teach them how, no one else in all the world can fear God and work true righteousness? They who fear God and work righteousness are not just in nations which have been blessed with the gospel ministry;

(2) Those who fear God in every nation actually do work righteousness, not merely *think*, as the

Pharisees did, that their unrighteous or self-righteous acts are works of righteousness; and,

(3) They *are* at the present time accepted with (or *by*) God. The text does not merely say that they will be accepted by Him in the future, only if and when the gospel is preached to them.

Nor does this truth even remotely suggest, nor do we imply at all, that the unevangelized heathen can somehow earn salvation by doing good works or by living up to “the light of nature” as an alternative to the blood salvation provided by Christ Jesus. This doctrine does mean that (a) the blood of Jesus Christ avails effectually for all His elect; (b) the Holy Spirit effectively applies regeneration and salvation to them in His own good time, regardless of where they are; and (c) He does so when He so wills, in spite of the irrelevancy of whether or not the gospel or good news of their salvation has been preached to them.

### LYDIA

12. **Lydia, in Acts 16:** God Himself makes the difference between the unregenerate and the regenerate heart. “For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it (1 Corinthians 4.7)?”

The Lord opens the hearts of His people. We rejoice that Lydia and her companions worshiped the living and true God before Paul ever preached to them! “And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which **worshipped God**, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul (Acts 16.14).” Her worship of God was genuine, never questioned, showing she had already been born of God’s Spirit. Peter described her exactly when he told Cornelius, “In every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him (Acts 10.35).” God opened her heart to the gospel preaching as a continuation of the good work He had already begun in her, which He will perform until the day of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1.6).

### ATHENS

13. We rejoice in the fact that **God’s elect in Athens** worshiped the living and true God before Paul ever preached to them! They worshiped Him in

ignorance *for a while*, it is true: “Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you (Acts 17.23).”

The phrase, *ignorantly worship*, stands out like a teeter-totter with one word on each end. The advocate of the gospel-regeneration error majors on the minor, the negative word *ignorantly*, and ignores the major, the positive word *worship*, as though it is a hopeless impossibility that such persons can be heaven-born children of God until the gospel preacher arrives to correct their thinking. The free-grace preacher, on the other hand, admits the minor—their ignorance—but he majors on the positive: Remember, it was Paul who said they *worshipped* God. They worshiped Him in ignorance, true enough, but who among God’s elect has not worshiped Him in ignorance, in some error or another, at one time or another? The question before us is not one of their ignorance when they first begin, or where they are in their belief at any one point in time, but it is only how they end. It is probably not the case of all of the saints, but the experiential order for myriads of them is:

A. They come into this world dead in trespasses in sins, they are in total spiritual ignorance, and while in such a state they do not worship God. Then,

B. They are born of His Spirit or regenerated; they worship God in spirit, although they are for a time in doctrinal ignorance. Then,

C. They are taught by God, led by His Spirit, and they worship Him in spirit **and** in truth. “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him **must** worship him in spirit and in truth (John 4.24).” God will see to it.

(1) Such was the case of the blind man of John, chapter 9, referred to above. Christ had healed him, body, soul, and spirit, yet he did not know who had done this marvelous thing for him, other than this: he knew His name was Jesus (verse 11) and he thought Jesus was a prophet (verse 17). He did not know where Jesus was (verse 12). He did not know that Jesus Christ was a sinless Being (verse 25). He did not know who the Son of God was (verse 36). Will the gospel-regenerationist tell us he was still dead in sins because he wasn’t an expert in the doctrine of Christology?

He *did* know “God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth (verse 31).” He did know that “Since the

world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.” He did know that “If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.” Do you realize how many untold thousands of the “ordinary people” of this world believe in a sovereign God in spite of all the Arminian swill they have been inundated with from the time of their infancy? Someone besides the vast majority of the radio preachers and televangelists of this apostate generation has taught them. “It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me (John 6.45).” The phrase *taught of God* does not mean taught about God; it means they shall be taught *by* God; God the Father, to the exclusion of all creation, is the source of the teaching which leads them to Christ.

This formerly blind man was made willing to stand alone for a Saviour whose origin and character he did not fully know, willing to be excluded from the synagogue even when his own parents feared to stand with him. Jesus said, “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.” But the gospel-regenerationists say he was not born of God because he was not yet doctrinally grounded in the Bible.

Later, when Jesus came to him again, asking if he believed on the Son of God, “He answered and said, Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?” At this point, he did not know Jesus Christ as the Son of God. The gospel-regeneration advocates would say he was still spiritually dead.

“And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.” At what point did he receive spiritual life? *Before* or *after* he worshiped Jesus? They will probably say it was Christ’s answer that was the preaching that regenerated him. This is not the case at all. Prior to Christ’s words in verse 37, the man had said in verse 36, “Who is He, **Lord**...?” No one can truly call Jesus **Lord** but by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12.3)!

(2) Such was the similar case of the impotent man described in John 5. He did not know who had healed him and told him to “Rise, take up thy bed, and walk (verses 8, 13).”

This man was given a desire to use his newly given strength to go to the temple (verse 14). There,

he grew in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Did he “find Christ”? No, not at all! “Afterward **Jesus** findeth **him** in the temple (verse 14).” He grew a little: “The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole (verse 15).”

(3) Such was likewise the case of these saints at Mars Hill in Athens. The Lord does not leave His elect in their ignorance. Part of what salvation is about is, God saves His people from their ignorance and from themselves, and it is God, not the preacher, who through it all does the saving.

When considering Paul’s discourse on Mars Hill, it is of the utmost interest and importance in the matter of so-called “gospel regeneration” to see that **Paul did not quote one single solitary verse of biblical Scripture to the Athenians!** Instead, he preached “certain of your own poets,” quoting from Aratus of Cilicia, who was born around 315 BC, and Cleanthes of Assos (c. 330 BC to c. 231 BC).

This latter poet, Cleanthes, was the successor of Zeno as the head of the Stoic school of philosophy that was well represented in Paul’s audience that day Acts 17.18). Known and remembered for emphasizing the religious side of the Stoic doctrine more than the philosophical, Cleanthes authored an extraordinary hymn to Zeus which survives to this day.

While the underlying thought of this hymn is pantheistic, **Zeus is not represented therein as the god of mythology but as the spirit who permeates and rules the universe** (after *The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature*, 1940. Emphasis supplied). The first stanza of this hymn reads as follows:

Thou, who amid the Immortals art  
throned the highest in glory,

Giver and Lord of life, who by law  
disposest of all things,

Known by many a name, yet One Al-  
mighty for ever,

Hail, O Zeus! For to Thee should each  
mortal voice be uplifted:

*Offspring are we too of thine, we and all  
that is mortal around us.*

(Emphasis supplied)

It is this last line, duplicated almost verbatim in the writings of Aratus, from which Paul quotes.

This raises a most pressing and perplexing question for the gospel-regeneration advocates, a question they must answer if they would continue trying to offer a show of honesty and integrity: If the Bible were so very necessary to regeneration, as they so blindly argue, then why did not Paul quote from Moses, Isaiah, or Jeremiah? Or, steeped in philosophy as his Greek hearers were, why did not Paul quote the philosopher Solomon? If he would quote poetry to them, why did he not quote that of David, the sweet psalmist of Israel? *Why did the apostle only quote these Greek philosophical poets and not the Scriptures?* Or is ancient Greek poetry sufficient "Scripture" to effectuate the new birth?

"Blasphemy!" says the Arminian means-and-measures man, and we reply with equal vigor, so, too, it is blasphemy for the modern gospel-regenerationists to say that our God cannot regenerate anyone until He gets a Bible, bound in someone's shoe-leather, to the poor benighted heathen.

"Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them (verse 34)." These saints were born "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" before Paul ever arrived and declared Him unto them (verse 23). *Certain* ones. How certain? Certain enough that their names had been eternally inscribed in the Lamb's book of life. That is how certain it was that they would believe and attach themselves to Paul.

### A SPIRITUALLY DEAD HEART

14. The Living God does not use terms relating to spiritual death unadvisedly. Men are dead in trespasses and in sins (Ephesians 2.1). The physically dead know nothing, feel nothing, do nothing. There is a direct spiritual parallel (or the Lord would not have given us this term, "dead in trespasses and sins"), in that the spiritually dead know nothing of God and godliness, righteousness, holiness, sin, salvation, or their own state, present and future. They feel nothing; no pricking of conscience, no piercing of their heart. Their heart is like the adamant, the hardest of all stones (Zechariah 7.12).

*For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing...*(Ecclesiastes 9.5). This text has been used unadvisedly to preach the heresy of "soul sleep," but it teaches no such thing. It is saying that, as the physical corpse is physically dead and therefore knows nothing more in this world, no memory, no thinking, no pleasurable or painful sensations, no perception with the eyes or ears; even so, the spiritually dead are dead to God and godliness; they know nothing of spiritual things, of God and His holiness and righteousness, and they cannot see or enter into the kingdom of God until they are born from above (John 3.3, 5).

The unregenerate can be cut *to* the heart, but their wicked hearts cannot be penetrated short of God's sovereign work. Peter preached Christ to the Jewish high priest and his council. "When they heard that, they were **cut to the heart**, and took counsel to slay them (Acts 5.33)." Later, Stephen preached to the same ones. "When they heard these things, they were **cut to the heart**, and they gnashed on him with their teeth (Acts 7.54)." You will note that in both these instances their being cut to the heart and the resulting murderous intent was brought about by the preaching of Peter and Stephen. This is a strange reaction indeed if preaching was designed to regenerate its hearers!

The regenerated child of God stands in sharp contrast to the spiritually dead. Those with spiritual life can and do feel the pain of their sins; they fear God and cry out for mercy and grace. Like all newborn infants, they cry, not in order to be born, but because they are born. They do not hear in order to born; they are born in order that they may hear. They do not see in order to born; they are born in order that they may see. They are pricked **in** their hearts. "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do (Acts 2.37)?"

Unlike the unregenerate Pharisees, the very Moses in whom they gloried had a heart into which God placed certain things: "And when he was full forty years old, **it came into his heart** to visit his brethren the children of Israel (Acts 7.23)."

From whence did this desire to visit his brethren come while he, as heir to the throne of Pharaoh, had

been raised in and surrounded by Egyptian idolatry? From his mother? There is no doubt she was a woman of faith who influenced him greatly when he was a child, but she was not the source of this desire.

Specifically, how did *this* come into his heart exactly when he was forty years old and not when he was thirty-nine or forty-one? In the Scriptures, the number forty is significant, and Moses' life is divided evenly into three forty-year periods. How did this desire get into his heart at the exact appointed time necessary to bring this about? Was it placed there by Jethro his father-in-law, Zipporah his wife, or Aaron his high priest-preacher-brother? No; he had not yet met Jethro or married Zipporah, and Aaron was neither priest nor preacher when this desire came into Moses' heart. *It came into his heart* by nothing less than the direct operation of the Holy Spirit of Jehovah in conjunction with the predestinated purpose of God.

### SAUL OF TARSUS

15. Saul of Tarsus was no different in this respect from any other child of grace. The evidence he gave, even before Christ Jesus called him on the Damascus road, was that he had already been made spiritually alive. He was feeling the goading, pricking work of the Holy Spirit in his life, and he was kicking against it all. Why else would Jesus the Lord of glory have said to him, "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks (Acts 9.5)"?

What is evidence of natural life in the womb before birth? There is simple evidence which all mothers have known, even from ancient times, long before there were stethoscopes and sonograms: The mother knows life is there, because the baby, alive though yet unborn, kicks.

Saul was alive spiritually, predestined to be born from above at the time Christ appeared unto him, as surely as he was predestinated to be the apostle Paul.

Not only so, but Paul said he was a pattern-example of those who would later believe: "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, **for a pattern** to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting (1 Timothy 1.16)." This pattern included life and kicking before his actual birth or deliverance was effected by the Lord Jesus. Are you cut to Paul's pattern?

### EXPERIENCE CAN BE DECEIVING

16. In regeneration and salvation, unless the child of grace is protected, guided and taught by the Holy Spirit about what is happening to him, he can be deceived in his thinking about his own experience. Experience proves nothing, one way or another, except in the mind of the one who has had it. Eliphaz had an experience. He saw a scary bugaboo that talked to him in a dream and made his flesh crawl (Job 4.12ff). He was wrong in his understanding of his experience, and God condemned him (Job 42.7f). Job also had an experience of scary dreams and visions (Job 7.14), and God vindicated him (Job 42.7f).

We cannot judge by our own experience, or someone else's, then; yea, we cannot judge the genuineness of our own experience, because we sometimes read things into it that are not there, as did Eliphaz, making our experience fit our preconceived beliefs. That is why, in our attempts to prove a point, Scripture and the doctrine of Christ is infinitely to be preferred over any dream, vision, or emotional experience, no matter how much such "experiences" have impressed us. The Scriptures were given, not to regenerate the unbeliever, but, "That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (2 Timothy 3.17)." One must be a child of God before the Scriptures mean anything to him. When once he is quickened to new life in Christ, his experience, to be valid, must be weighed, tried and validated by the sacred Scripture.

True biblical experience will be in harmony with the doctrine of Christ. A doctrine must not be based solely upon experience. Instead, the experience must be measured by the doctrine of Christ. We are required to "examine ourselves" (2 Corinthians 13.5) to see if our experience harmonizes with the Scripture. Upon reflection, God's children must admit they had spiritual life before they could believe the gospel and repent. If spiritual life is of free grace (which it is), then the Spirit of God began the work of creation in His children without the instrumentality of any man. He used no man as an instrument to create the material universe (Genesis 1), and He uses no man to make His people *new* creations in Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 5.17). They were changed inwardly before they were ever changed outwardly.

This inward change was the imparting of divine life by the direct operation of the Holy Spirit.

### THE FIRST REGENERATED PERSON

17. If gospel regeneration is true, then who was the gospel preacher who got the very first person born again and saved? Someone had to be the first one born again. Before that, there was no regenerated gospel preacher to preach to him. It was strictly between God and the unregenerate sinner, One on one. How was this specific sinner born from above? By the direct operation of the Holy Spirit.

We have heard Arminian gospel-regenerationists, trying to validate their position, say that God “can even use Scriptures quoted by an unsaved man to get people saved.” The Arminians’ god, then, by their own admission, must occasionally rely upon Satan and his children for help to get himself out of an otherwise helpless situation.

### VERY BOLD

18. “But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me (Romans 10.20).”

Multitudes there are who do not seek after God and do not ask after Him, or inquire about Him, or from Him. This is the universal plight of the natural man, dead in sins. Not all who are in this desperate plight are delivered—the reprobates are not—but the elect are nevertheless saved by the sovereign grace of the Father’s election, Christ the Son’s blood redemption, and the Holy Spirit’s regeneration, in order that they will seek God and inquire of Him. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in the eternal council constitute the threefold cord that is not broken (Ecclesiastes 4.12). What, therefore, can the preacher add to the work of the covenant-keeping triune God?

We would be very bold also, then, to say the exact same thing Isaiah said: God is found of them that do not seek Him, and He manifests Himself to them that ask not after Him. Conclusively, this is only because He reveals Himself to them. They do not initiate this communication with God; He begins it with them.

Paul quotes Isaiah again in Romans 15.21: “But as it is written, To whom he was **not** spoken of, they *shall* see: and they that have **not** heard *shall* understand.” This quote is taken from Isaiah 52.15, part

of one of the plainest prophecies of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament, where Isaiah says, “So shall He sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at Him: for **that which had not been told them** shall they see; and that which **they had not heard** shall they consider.”

Neither Isaiah nor Paul says or even remotely implies that these blessed ones will see only as soon as or some time after someone speaks to them of Christ. This text prevents that misunderstanding.

Neither writer says that the elect will understand only as soon as they hear the gospel or some time thereafter. The inspired writers say the saints’ understanding comes before they hear a preacher.

Neither the prophet nor the apostle says these saints’ seeing will be the result of someone’s *telling* them of Christ. They say the opposite.

Neither Isaiah nor Paul says that these whom Christ shall “sprinkle” among the many nations will consider as a result of their hearing Bible verses or gospel preaching. The texts preclude all human intervention.

In each case, the gospel preacher, the “missionary,” the speaker, the teller of glad tidings—these all arrive too late to bring about the seeing eye, the hearing ear, the understanding heart, and the considering mind. All, all is a direct and immediate gift of sovereign grace: “The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the LORD hath made even both of them (Proverbs 20.12).” “Then wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab, and *every wise hearted man, in whom the LORD put wisdom and understanding* to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary...(Exodus 36.1).” Solomon prayed, “Give therefore thy servant an **understanding heart**...(1 Kings 3.9)” and Jehovah gave him exactly that (verse 12). “**Wisdom** resteth in the **heart** of him that hath **understanding** (Proverbs 14.33).”

The reprobate is expressly denied all these gifts by sovereign fiat: “Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and **understand with their heart**, and convert, and be healed (Isaiah 6.10, quoted by Jesus in Matthew 13 and John 12, and by Paul in Acts 28).” “They have not known nor understood: for He hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; and their **hearts**, that they cannot **understand** (Isaiah 44.18).”

By the time the disciples got to him, Lazarus was already alive. They were too late for us to think they had anything to do with giving him life.

By the time the worldly crowd got to him, the demoniac of Gadara was no longer a naked, raving, crying maniac cutting himself with stones, but he was “sitting, clothed, and in his right mind.” And this made the throng **afraid**. They did not know how to deal with a Savior who has such power that He neither solicits nor needs their help. To this day, they are still afraid that He cannot do anything without their meddling assistance.

By the time the midwives arrived to “assist” at the birth of the Israelite children, they had already been born: “And the king of Egypt called for the midwives, and said unto them, Why have ye done this thing, and have saved the men children alive? And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them (Exodus 1.18f).” We would be very bold, bold enough to say, Jerusalem which is above...which is the mother of us all (Galatians 4.26), is not like the Egyptian women, either. She is lively, and she is delivered of her children ere the midwife preacher arrives.

“Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children (Isaiah 66.8).” Ah, and where were the midwife and the gospel preacher while all this was going on?

“Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the LORD: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God (Isaiah 66.9).” “Yes,” answers the gospel-regeneration midwife. “Yes, because we could not get an evangelist to some of Thy elect.”

But there is yet the sprinkling this Saviour does. It is not an emissary of Rome or one of her harlot daughters who sprinkles these blessed ones at a laughable little “baptismal font,” but it is He, the Lord Christ Himself, who does this wondrous sprinkling. That with which Christ sprinkles these elect vessels of mercy in the many nations is both blood and water, even as it flowed from His pierced side and pain-wracked body:

**Water and blood:** “This is he that came by **water and blood**, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by **water and blood**. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and **the water, and the blood**: and these three agree in one (1 John 5.6ff).”

**Blood:** “the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and **sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ**: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied (1 Peter 1.1f).”

**Water:** “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you (Ezekiel 36.25).” This is not baptismal water (baptism is immersion, never a sprinkling). It is the washing of regeneration (Titus 3.5). “He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of His belly shall flow rivers of living water (John 7.38).” These rivers flow out of His—Christ’s—innermost Being, not out of his, the believer’s. Well might A. M. Toplady write:

...Let the water and the blood,  
From Thy wounded side which flow’d,  
Be of sin the double cure,  
Cleanse me from its guilt and power.

#### WHAT IS ETERNAL LIFE?

19. What is eternal life? Jesus said, “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent (John 17.3).” On the veracity of the three-one God, then, we can guarantee that every elect vessel of mercy without exception, in whatever age, kindred, tribe, or tongue, whether or not he or she ever hears the gospel or any Bible at all, or any preacher or preaching in this life; every one of them will certainly know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent, and know and praise Him in all eternity.

#### MEANS OF GRACE

20. The modern Arminian-Missionary movement, by teaching that God must have the Scriptures

handy in order to get anyone born again, is perpetuating the Roman doctrine of “the means of grace,” a subject we cannot now begin in this already lengthy piece. We hope to have more to say on the worldly doctrine of “the means of grace” in yet another article addressing this subject.

—C. C. Morris

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## 1 JOHN 2:2

*And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2.2).*

So reads the King James Version (KJV) of the verse which bears our title’s citation. Arminians run to this verse as though it somehow refutes the doctrinal position that Christ’s atonement is effectual for the elect only and is intended and applied only to them. This verse does not refute “the limited atonement,” as this phase of the gospel of Jesus Christ has come to be known, and it certainly does not indicate that He died for all the Adamic race.

We believe in the *plenary*, or verbal inspiration of the Scriptures; that is, the prophets, the apostles, and the other biblical writers were originally inspired and moved by the Holy Spirit to record them: “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Peter 1.21).” This truth applies not only the prophets’ speaking but also to their writing: “Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow (1 Peter 1.10f).”

We search our own writings for typographical errors or grammatical blunders, not to learn from what we have written. The old prophets, on the other hand, searched their own writings to learn what the Holy Spirit who was in them did signify.

It has never been widely believed, that we know of, that this holy inspiration carries over to copies from the original manuscripts (there *are* copyists’

errors) or to the translations of either the copies or the original manuscripts. God’s providence governs translations, yes, indeed; God’s inspiration, though, does not extend to translations or copies.

The doctrine of verbal inspiration is true even down to “the jots and tittles,” the equivalent of saying, “the dot over each *i* and the cross-mark on each *t*.” “For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled (Matthew 5.18).”

Most of our readers endorse some form of belief regarding the Bible as set forth in our Principle #2 (Page 20): “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.”

The Second London Confession of Faith words it this way: “The Old Testament in *Hebrew*, (which was the Native language of the people of God of old) and the New Testament in *Greek*, (which at the time of the writing of it was most generally known to the Nations) being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and Providence kept pure in all Ages, are therefore authentical; so as in all controversies of Religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them.”

If there ever was any controversy of religion, there revolves one around the question, “For whom did Christ die?” It seems strange that those advocating the limited and effectual atonement have seldom resorted to the Greek of this text. It is not strange at all that the universalists are silent in this area. Therefore, we submit the following notes for the consideration of the Lord’s people.

The following three facts about this verse cannot be successfully refuted:

1. The italicized words in verse 2, “*the sins of*,” are supplied by the translators and are not justified by anything in the original language of the text. The KJV text says, “And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of* the whole world.” Anyone may verify (a) that the words *the sins of* are italicized, (b) why the translators used italics here (to indicate supplied words), and (c) whether they were right or wrong in doing so.

Why the translators weakened, faltered, and put these words in where no words belong is an unex-



plainable mystery if it was not done only to appease the critics of their day. The translators surely had their critics; it is said that the Calvinists said the KJV was too Arminian and the Arminians said it was too Calvinistic. Being only men, and a committee at that, they did compromise here and there a bit, while still producing the best English Bible available from then until now, and it will probably remain so until the world burns. But the fact is, they faltered here. We say this because,

2. The Greek word for **sin**, a form of which occurs twice in verse 1 but only once in verse 2, is **hamartano**, (**αμαρτανω**, #264 in *Strong's Concordance*). **Hamartano** is a word that is big enough to see easily if it is there. It is not. By its not being there, it becomes conspicuous by its absence.

Be assured, then, something is wrong in a major way when someone adds the phrase, "*the sins of*" without having the word **hamartano** in the original text to justify its being there in our favorite translation. Thanks be to the Lord that He put it into the translators' hearts to be honest enough to at least italicize the words which do not belong there, thereby flagging them for our attentive examination.

It falls upon us to know, then, as God gives us the grace to do so, whether or not the King's men were right. In this case, our settled conviction is that the verse is more faithful to the original by leaving out the italicized words.

But, someone is sure to ask, is not the phrase "the sins of" implied? "Not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world"? No, not in the least.

Whoever the "our" are, be they many or few, all or some, the "our" **must be defined by the Scriptures**. The gospel itself requires it: "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you **the gospel** which I preached unto you ... For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for **our sins according to the scriptures**; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day **according to the scriptures** (1 Corinthians 15.1-4). Here, Paul defines the gospel as it is nowhere else defined in the Bible. The gospel is the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, for the sins of a designated group **as defined by the scriptures**. Nowhere does anyone in the Scripture say to any indiscriminate crowd, "*Jesus loves you*" or "*Christ died for you.*" To say, "Jesus loves you, He loves everyone, He died

for everybody" is a fatal error of the Arminian world, unjustified by any verse in the Bible.

The Bible is written to a specific people and for them alone. It is not a news magazine by the grocery-store checkout counter. It is Christ's love letter to His bride (Ephesians 5.25ff; 2 Timothy 3.16f). To trivialize or generalize this is to give that which is holy unto the dogs, and to cast your pearls before swine.

Suppose Zed loves Abigail and sends her a letter saying, "I love you, I want you to be my wife. My ranch, my fortune, and my life are yours." This letter falls into the hands of Ahaz, who publishes millions of copies of it and distributes it all over the entire world by the hands of messengers whom he tells: "Spread the good news: Tell everyone you meet that Zed loves them and wants to share all his stuff with them and with the whole world." What is behind this appalling ignorance? It is Ahaz's taking Zed's private letter hopelessly out of the context in which it was written and to whom it was addressed. This is exactly what Arminianism has done with the Bible's message of the love that Christ has for His church and the atonement He provided for her alone.

Always, Christ's finished work is presented as for a specific people. Ten thousand times over, the gospel is not "Christ died for sins." It is "how that Christ died **for-our-sins-according-to-the-Scriptures**." Who the "our" are, and how He died for them, is spelled out in the volume of the Book.

To whom, then, did John write? Who are the "our" he had under consideration? Let Paul speak: "And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen [Gentiles], and they unto the circumcision (Galatians 2.9)." This same John, then, with Cephas (Peter) and James, ministered primarily among "the circumcision," i.e., the Hebrew-Jewish saints, and it was principally to them John wrote his three epistles. But continue; we are not through with 1 John 2.2 yet.

3. The Greek word "for" in this text is *peri* (**περι**). This word has to do with *around*, *about*, or *concerning*. From *peri* we get such words as *perimeter* (the measure around something), *periscope* (*peri* around + *scopus* to see = to see around), and a score of other words having to do with **around**.

Doctors love this word and its derivatives: pericardium (around the heart, but not the heart itself), pericranium (around the skull, but not the skull and its contents), perimysium (around a muscle, but not the muscle), peridental (around a tooth, but not the tooth), periotic (around the ear, but not the ear), and other words we will spare you. The point is made: **Peri** means *around, about, or concerning*, but it never means everything something goes around. You see around with a periscope, but you do not see everything in the world.

**Peri** in *periodical* has a double implication: As time comes *around*, a periodical is published again, and then it is sent *around*. *The Remnant* is literally sent *around* the world, but not to everyone in the world.

#### SUMMARY

The essence of this verse is plainly this: "Christ is the propitiation for us Hebrew believers, and not for us only, but also around the world." God has a people among the Gentiles too, John is saying. The Lord Jesus Christ is the propitiation for them also, as well as for His people among the Hebrews.

John was later given a vision of the redeemed in heaven singing these words: "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood **out of** every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation (Revelation 5.9)." As they were redeemed **out of** the nations, it is plain the nations themselves were not redeemed. The atonement is limited to the elect, effectual to them alone, extending wherever they are around (peri) the world, exactly as the text says.

—C. C. Morris

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#### ANNOUNCING

**T**he Union Primitive Baptist Association will convene with Zion's Rest Church of Tomball, Texas, on Friday before the second Sunday in October, 2000.

For more information, contact the Moderator, Elder Wade Johnson, P O Box 872, Athens TX 75751-0872, (903)-675-7097, or their Clerk, Brother R. D. Spell, 21118 Hufsmith-Khorville Road, Tomball, TX 77375, (713)-351-0449.

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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.