

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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THE EVERLASTING COVENANT OF GRACE

From all eternity, God made a covenant with His Son on behalf of the elect. In this covenant, God purposed to pardon all their sins, to justify them with the imputed righteousness of Christ, to bless them with all spiritual blessings in Christ, and to never leave or forsake them until they finally stand before Him in glory.

Christ accepted all those given to Him by the Father, to give Himself as a perfect sacrifice for their sins, and to rise again for their justification. In the active and passive obedience of Jesus, the Surety and Mediator of the elect, He would one day deliver them to the Father without spot or blemish.

God the Father promised to accept everyone chosen in Christ and to bless every member of the mystical body of His Son with every spiritual blessing they would ever need. If even one of the saints could ever provoke the wrath of God or be lost, the covenant would have been broken. As with earthly contracts or agreements, it is the same with the heavenly one. If one condition is broken, the whole is made null and void. So if any of the family of God could be lost, the everlasting covenant of grace would have failed. But the Lord remembers for them His covenant; He neither regards their good works, or their bad deeds. Jehovah looks beyond these to His precious Son. It is with Him that the everlasting covenant was made, ordered in all things and sure. The Father beholds the blood of the Lamb slain from

the foundation of the world, with which the covenant is sealed. Even as He passed over the houses of the children of Israel sprinkled with blood; God views the blood of His Son, and passes by.

The blessed Spirit reveals to the children of God their lot in the covenant of grace. The blessings and benefits are theirs by the finished work of Jesus, their Mediator and Head; their names are written in heaven, recorded in the Lamb's book of life. No earthly blessings can be compared to this. Surely it is all the salvation of the elect, and all their desire.

“Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1.2).”

The scriptures do not declare in any one place, that there was a contractual agreement among the Godhead; nevertheless, a careful study of scripture reveals that a covenant does exist. Each member of the Godhead, scripturally called the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, has a part to fulfill in the everlasting covenant.

“According as He (The Father) hath chosen us in Him (Christ) before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love (Ephesians 1.4).” The Father chose a people in the Son, before He began the work of creation. Jesus Himself said, “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me;” In another place the Son of God testifies of those given to Him in the covenant of grace, “...that He should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given Him.” Evidently then, however

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it was conceived in the eternal, immutable decrees of the Godhead, the church of God was given to Him from all eternity to redeem.

If one reads the letter to the Hebrews, he will very easily discover that the precious Son of God came into this world for the express purpose of giving Himself a sacrifice, for the children that the Father had given Him. In the tenth chapter of Hebrews it is written that the Father prepared a body for the Son so He could offer it as a perfect and sufficient sacrifice for the atonement and satisfaction of the elect. Christ was set up as the High Priest and Mediator of the elect from everlasting. He was made a priest forever, after the order of Melchisedec. He was the Surety of a better testament, the Mediator of the new testament. The sufferings and humiliations of the Son of glory were predestined to take place from all eternity that the children of the covenant might receive their promised inheritance.

There is also a work to be fulfilled by the Holy Spirit, in the covenant of grace. The Spirit takes the finished work of Christ and applies its benefits to the saints. By the sprinkling of the blood of Christ, they are forever sanctified. They are made holy by the blood of the Lamb, shed on their behalf. This manifestation of the life of Christ in the elect is the heavenly birth. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost (Titus 3.5)." This work, poured out upon the chosen and foreknown, is a result of the active and passive obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When the work of Christ was accomplished and completed, He promised that another Comforter should come. This Spirit of truth, sent by Christ, guides the children of God into all truth. The Spirit speaks only of the things of Christ, and experimentally shows them to the elect: "Howbeit when the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come (John 16.13)." Please read verses 14-15. "He shall glorify me: for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you."

To the child of grace blessed with an understanding and believing heart, there is nothing more beautiful than the everlasting covenant of grace. That there should ever have been a covenant at all, demonstrates the amazing grace and mercy of a Holy God. It is a mystery deep and wide to contemplate what moved the Three-In-One God to shower His eternal favors upon such a race of sinful creatures. How firm a foundation was laid for the church. There was no room for mistakes, chance, accidents, or uncertainties. Every part and portion was fixed and secure by the absolute eternal purposes of Jehovah.

May the children of the covenant ever be blessed to see and understand, what a great and precious work was completed on their behalf by a Thrice-Holy God.

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WHOSOEVER WILL?

For well over three decades now, we have waited patiently for someone, anyone, to respond to one particular question in our little Quiz for Soul-winners:

Please give the Bible reference to find the oft-quoted text, “Whosoever will may come.”

At this late date, we doubt that anyone will ever answer this little question. Not that people have not tried. We are quite sure that many a person, confronted with that simple question, has run to his Bible seeking the answer, ready and willing to confound us. We personally know of several who have tried, and tried hard, to find this, their “text,” before they had to give up.

When their first sounding dredged up nothing, they in disarray turned to the concordance in the back of their Bible, and, of course, they got no help there. When that failed, some gave up altogether, happy

never to mention the subject to us ever again. Others, though, still eager to put us to shame, turned frantically to a real Bible concordance, yes, a real one like Strong’s *Exhaustive Concordance*, before they had to give up, exhausted (that may partly be why it is called an exhaustive concordance) by this simple little assignment. But give up they have, they must, and they always will, because there is no such text.

How much good would a “whosoever will may come” do for the widow’s son, lying dead, being carried to his burial (Luke 7.11-15)?

How much good would a “whosoever will may come” do for Lazarus, lying dead in his tomb (John 11)? Even his loved ones were somewhat loathe to remove the stone from his grave. His loving but hesitant sister Martha said, “By this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.”

How much good would a “whosoever will may come” do for Saul of Tarsus, when he was “yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord,” and desiring letters of authority so that “if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem”? The account in Acts the ninth chapter would read entirely differently if it had been a grinning, sweating, extroverted, back-slapping, lapel-grabbing, arm-twisting, button-holing, door-to-door, twentieth or twenty-first century, self-proclaimed “soul-winner” who greeted Saul on the Damascus road with a cheery, “Whosoever will may come,” instead of the One who actually met him, the Lord of Glory! What do you suppose Saul would have done to such a “soul-winner”?

How much good would a “whosoever will may come” do for the “impotent man,” as he is usually called, the man who lay beside the pool of Bethesda for thirty-eight years (John 5)? We shudder at the suggestion, but, imagine for a moment if you can, that man lying there on one side of the pool, and the Jesus proclaimed by Arminianism standing on the other side of the pool and saying, “I have done my part; now, it is up to you. You must do your part. Whosoever will may come.” Not a pretty picture, is it? You say, “That is blasphemy, even to think such a thought.” And, you are right. We are not the ones proclaiming such a blasphemous picture, however.

It is the Arminians who do so. The impotent man could have as easily walked to Jesus on the water of the pool of Bethesda as he could have come to Jesus “of his own free will.”

Paul plainly warned of those who would proclaim “another Jesus” and “another gospel” which is indeed not another; for gospel means good news, and there is no good news in the “whosoever will may come but it is left entirely up to you” proclamation.

The question arises not for us, then, but for those who advocate Arminianism’s “Whosoever will may come” to answer: If on the one hand it were as Arminianism preaches, that Christ could not save the impotent man though He desired to, unless the man would come to Him; and yet, on the other hand, if it were so that the impotent man could come of his own free will if he so desired, or that he could reject Christ if that was his desire; if it were as the Arminians proclaim it, then pray tell, who would *really* be the impotent one—the man by the pool, or the Christ proclaimed by Arminianism? Again, we are waiting for their answer.

Not to keep the self-styled soul-winners in suspense about the text any longer, however, the closest they will ever come to the verse they seek is found in Revelation 22.17: “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” There are a number of facts which fairly cry out for a comment here.

1. First, the text implicitly demonstrates that the entire Adamic race is permanently divided into two camps: the “whosoever wills” and the “whosoever won’ts.”

2. Second, the text says, “Whosoever will.” It says nothing about, and says nothing to, and does nothing for, the “whosoever won’ts.”

We all, by natural birth, choice, and practice are “whosoever won’ts.” The text itself does nothing whatsoever for those who “will not (John 5.40)” to change them into ones who will. It did not *then*, in the days our Lord walked the trails of Judea in the flesh; and, it does not *now*. It takes far more than a smooth-talking soul-winner murmuring sweet Bible-verses into the natural ear to effect the needed change. Saul of Tarsus was unwilling to come to Christ. For that matter, Moses was every bit as naturally unwilling as Pharaoh was, Jacob was as

unwilling as Esau, and the widow who fed Elijah was as unwilling as was Jezebel.

3. What, then, makes the difference? What makes God’s people willing to come to Christ when they by nature are unwilling, and by nature they are the children of wrath, even as others?

The question is really not “What makes the difference?” but “*Who* makes the difference?” Who maketh thee to differ? It is this God Himself: “Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power. . . . (Psalm 110.3).” But every day is the day of God’s power, is it not?

Certainly, this is so. But what this text is saying is this: Particularly, each of His people is made willing in the day God brings His effectual, irresistible grace and power to bear in his or her individual life. The sinner cannot be willing before the day God brings His irresistible, effectual power to bear in his life; nor can the sinner be unwilling after that day.

4. Fourth, the text does not say anything about “may come,” either whether they “will” or whether they “won’t.” The word “may” implies permission, and this text has nothing whatsoever to do with the granting of permission. It says, “Let him take of the water of life freely.” If a governor says of a prisoner, “*Let* him out,” this is not a word of permission to the prisoner but a command to his keeper! It implies that the prisoner already desires, or “wills” to be free. In the case of the sinner bound by Satan, it implies that the Lord has already begun His work in the sinner’s soul. And we may be confident of this, that “He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1.6).”

“Let” in the Scriptures means far more than “not to hinder” as in the giving of permission. Especially is this so when it is God Himself doing the speaking. This is the same Deity speaking here who in the beginning said “Let there be light” and there was light. There is as much power in this, the last “let” in the last chapter of the Bible, as there was in the first “let” in the first chapter of the Bible. If not, why not? The God of the scriptures has not changed. God simply said, “Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely,” and there was a willing people, taking of the water of life freely. All the evidence of Scripture, experience, and observation bears this out, and it devolves upon the Arminian will-worshippers to prove otherwise.

5. Lastly, for now, the text is addressed to those who hear, those who are athirst, those who are willing. They are one and the same. Hearing and thirsting are marks of the living, not of the dead. Hearing and thirsting are evidence of spiritual life in Christ.

It is impossible to separate the third word, *willing*, from the first two categories, those who *hear* and those who *thirst*. Thirsty, hearing people are willing people. They are the only ones who are. “Where the word of a king is, there is power (Ecclesiastes 8.4),” and we are here speaking of the King of Kings (Revelation 19.16) who has all power in heaven and in earth (Matthew 28.18), who spake and it was done and who commanded and it stood fast (Psalm 33.9). There is no power but of God, and the powers that be are ordained of God (Romans 13.1). Things are accomplished when He says “Let”!

Dr. Donald G. Barnhouse, a nationally known, old-line, predestinarian Presbyterian who died several years ago, spoke one night back in the 1950s to a congregation of over two thousand people in an interdenominational meeting held in Springfield, Missouri. I was there to hear him.

Dr. Barnhouse, author of numerous doctrinal and experimental books, nationally known radio preacher of the free and sovereign grace of God, and for years the editor of the magazine *Eternity*, was a strong predestinarian. That evening I went to hear him because at that time I was desperately hungry to hear the truths of God’s sovereignty and predestination preached, truths I had been unable to hear among the Missionary Baptist churches with which I was then all too well acquainted.

Dr. Barnhouse preached without admixture the absolute sovereignty of Jehovah God, manifest in Jesus Christ’s having saved His own elect by His free and matchless grace. He preached the doctrines of sovereign election, predestination, Christ’s effectual blood atonement limited exclusively to God’s elect, irresistible grace, and the final preservation of the saints—any one of which should have given any Arminian a bad case of indigestion. That night his congregation, consisting mostly of Assembly of God Pentecostals, sat there enthralled, taking in the rich gospel of grace that few, if any, of them had ever heard before.

That night he said something that was one of the sweetest things I had ever in my life heard up to that time. Dr. Barnhouse told his audience,

Some of you will say, “But the Bible says, ‘Whosoever will.’” Of course it does, *but none will, until God reaches in and jiggles their willers!*

That may not be good grammar, especially for a Presbyterian Doctor, but it is mighty good Bible doctrine.

—Elder C. C. Morris

THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE WORD OF GOD

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (2 Timothy 3.16-17).

The Bible reader has often come across these verses while studying the scriptures. Many have taken for granted that every Christian believes there is no higher authority on earth than the written word of God. For the child of God who has been blessed to trust only in the finished work of Jesus Christ for all his salvation, there isn’t. In matters of faith, doctrine, and practice, the Holy Scriptures of eternal truth always have the final word.

Sadly in this age of easily obtained knowledge and education, many feel the Bible to be outdated, and of little use in the 21st century. Those who are ever learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth are caught in a whirlpool of delusion; they are slowly being sucked down by the power of their own vain deceit and the lies of the devil. They continue to grow worse in their ignorance and arrogance that they call wisdom.

The present day, monstrous, so-called “religious” machine is ample evidence of what the deluded minds of unregenerate men can accomplish. When unrestrained by the power of God, man quickly raises

himself up in his own eyes to defile the Scriptures and pervert them into saying whatever he would like them to say. This then enables man to do almost anything that he wishes in the name of God or religion.

All of the modern religious schemes and institutions bear witness to the fact that, when the Lord does not prevent man from following his own natural inclination toward lying and perverting the truth for selfish gain, man is able to build an empire on earth that testifies of the enmity that he has for God.

Nowhere in history has this been more clearly revealed, than when the pope and the apostate Roman church arose to power so long ago. In modern times, the missionary Baptists have the dubious honor of having the most efficient Christian-producing factory. Following them, is the present day Pentecostal, charismatic movement; the fastest growing "Christian" religious movement of the day.

It should be noted that all of the "results" of those who preach another gospel (which is not another, but a false gospel), are produced by a deliberate perversion of the truths found in the Bible.

It is easy enough to admit that the worldly wise are following this path of deception laid out by the devil, but it is much harder to conceive that children of grace may also fall prey to the snares of his errors. However, when the saints are left to themselves, and the Lord suffers his little ones to grow wise in their own ways, they are very capable of corrupting the purity of the word of truth with many false notions and useless speculations.

The Old School Primitive Baptists have almost always suffered the most when a restless, progressive spirit has come among them. A lack of satisfaction with what the Bible says on certain subjects has nearly always been the first symptom of this terrible illness. Failing to realize that the scriptures say what they mean and mean what they say is usually the worst problem. Many will follow a notion that they have fallen in love with and then seek to prove their idea from scripture. In doing this, they frequently wrest the verse of scripture from its context, and lose all sense of what it actually means. Whole churches have divided over this practice, and new denominations have been formed.

Often one of the explanations that someone may offer for their new novel idea is that they have received a

revelation from God or the Holy Spirit. Here is the beginning of error. No new revelations to the church, which is made up collectively of the saints, has been given since the time of the last apostle. That is, when the last existing apostle was called home by Jehovah, the age of revelation ceased. Many will say to this, "what about their initial experience of grace?" This indeed is a revealing of the Son in them, but this doctrine is also taught in the scriptures. Once again, the book of holy writ is the final authority on matters of faith. The best position should be that, if it is not in the Bible, then leave it alone. Don't go there.

Grace, experience, and the scriptures are what the Lord has provided his children with, while they live in the world. If these do not agree, then something is seriously wrong. It is these three things that produce proper belief and behavior in the saints.

Grace, because without it there would be no children of God. Grace is the root, the tree, the branches, and the fruit. Grace is the source of all that the Christian has or hopes to have, all that they are or aspire to be. Their beginnings and very existence are by God's grace.

Experience, because without it the saints could never know anything of their God or his grace. The Almighty works within his children both to will, and to do of his good pleasure. The results of this work of God, is that every spiritual grace is worked out by them in fear and with trembling. For the power of the Lord's amazing grace, when poured out by him into his vessels of mercy, is almost more than the Christian can stand. By this experience, it is made known to them their wretched and lost condition they are in by nature. Likewise, this experience teaches the saints of their need for a Saviour, because of their total inability to stand before God; they are taught they have no righteousness, or holiness of their own. Finding within themselves nothing to merit even the least of God's mercies, they are made to cry unto him for mercy because of their lost and hell-deserving condition. As the Spirit of Holiness continues His work within them, they are brought to the place in their life and experience to view Christ as their Saviour.

Having suffered the conviction of the Spirit of Truth for a season, they are then permitted by their Sovereign to hear the good news about what Christ

has secured for unworthy ones such as themselves. Good news indeed, when the gospel is brought to their hearts and minds, with understanding, by the power of God himself. The scriptures now agreeing with their experience, the little trembling child of grace is now an appropriate subject for gospel preaching. The scriptures then become of infinite value to the saints of God. They begin to view upon every page, no longer the wrath of God, but his grace and mercy, poured out for them, in the person of God's only begotten Son, Jesus the Christ.

Thus, it is demonstrated, that the Lord is gracious and good to provide all of the means in which the Christian is able to view his God. These means do not come by man. Man has nothing to do with these things; they are the result of God's eternal purpose and his good pleasure. They are not placed at the disposal of men to use as they will or will not. Many centuries have come and gone, but the purpose of God stands firm upon an unshakable foundation; the Lord knoweth them that are his, and the work that he has begun in his children he will continue until the day of Jesus Christ. "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity (2 Timothy 2.19)." "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1.6)."

The Bible has been preserved by the providence of God through all the centuries for his people. His children should make use of it at every opportunity they have, being ever mindful that their Heavenly Father has provided it for them. Many of the saints have lost their lives in the defense of the sacred text. It should never be taken lightly, or disregarded as unnecessary. Nobody should seek to ascend higher than what is written in the scriptures. All speculations should be avoided; human reasoning has no place in serious bible study. Prayer should ever accompany any reading or studying of the holy scriptures. It is the Holy Spirit's illumination that opens any word of knowledge to the saints.

The doctrines of grace are revealed in the Bible; all things that are necessary for the saints to grow in grace and knowledge are contained in this blessed book. Adding to or detracting from anything written

in the scriptures should be viewed as offensive to the perfections of a Thrice Holy God.

To seek to find out the ways of the Lord that he has not seen fit to reveal to his children is vain human speculation. This does not lead to greater knowledge, but to errors and problems. Jesus Christ is called, among other names, the Counselor. He alone, through the power of his Spirit, leads and guides his people into all truth. "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come (John 16.13)."

Not all of the children of grace possess the same level of knowledge or spiritual maturity. However, they shall all know just as much as God purposes they should. None shall ever lack for the spiritual knowledge or understanding that they will need for their time on earth (see Hebrews 8.10-11). Jehovah himself has eternally purposed, and provides in time, every possible supply that the saints shall ever need. The Lord lifts some up, much higher than others, for his own purpose and glory; while others, God permits to remain in much darkness. Undoubtedly, this is for the good of each individual; he makes all things work together for their good (see Romans 8.28).

Nothing that has been previously stated, should deter the Christian from seeking a greater knowledge of spiritual things. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him (James 1.5)."

It should be understood, that the Lord shall dispense wisdom and knowledge as he sees fit, and that it may not be what the saint is expecting. "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us (1 John 5.15)." The emphasis here is, "according to God's will," and not according to the will of man.

The lessons and information revealed in the scriptures are sufficient to last any person a lifetime of prayerful study. There is enough material in the Bible for the Christian to ponder over all his days, and never grasp it all. Why anyone would desire to complicate matters by seeking after mysteries, or formulating new doctrines, is a question beyond the understanding of this writer.

A prayerful study of the word of God, with a conscious desire to keep things simple and in context, will go a long way in the prevention of errors or needless speculation. From the human standpoint, the child of God must humbly request God to speak to them from the pages of Holy Scripture; with the witness of the Holy Spirit, this should be all that the trembling saints can ever ask for.

One other point of interest should be noted. The Old School Particular, Predestinarian, Primitive Baptists, possess a rich history. A tremendous amount of historical documentation remains in existence, with old writings being republished frequently. Any Baptist who desires to look into the past, to examine the footsteps of the flock, may do so more easily now than at any other time in history. In these old works, the positions of historical Old School Baptists are readily available. The doctrines of grace, experiences of the old saints, and even strange and unusual interpretations of some scriptures, may be examined to see what has preceded the current positions. It goes without saying, that these documents should be read with the Bible close at hand, and if some point that is set forth does not agree with scripture, it should be disregarded.

By the grace of the Sovereign God of the Universe, through the eternal union with the Son, and the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit, the knowledge and understanding of the Holy Scriptures is brought to life for the faithful in Christ. This should be sufficient for every need, trial, and blessing.

Much more might be said on this important issue, by other writers with clearer views. May the Lord impress them to address these things, ever looking to the God of all Wisdom for guidance.

—Elder Bruce Atkisson

EDITOR'S NOTE

Should the Lord so bless us, beginning in the next issue of *The Remnant*, we hope to present a series of articles by Elder Atkisson on the subject of the doctrines of grace. As the Lord blesses you to do so, please remember in your prayers *The Remnant* and those who write for you in these pages.

JOB: GOD'S ANSWER TO ALL FREE-WILL SYSTEMS

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

As long as Bible readers believe what Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar said, or try to make religious sense of what these friends of Job said to him, they will not understand the book of Job. To give credence to the religious mouthing of Bildad and the others as they attacked poor Job is worse than a mistake. The religion of Bildad, Eliphaz, Zophar, and Elihu is strictly free will Conditionalism to be condemned out of hand.

Conversely, if you have ever been misunderstood by family and friends who are bent on finding and exposing your faults and failures before God; if you have ever been alone, in body, soul, or spirit; if you have ever questioned what was happening to you and why, and you, like Job, were unable to explain it all, or any of it; but through it all, seemingly against all odds, your inner faith and hope somehow held fast to your God and Savior in the darkness; then perhaps Job is the book for you. If you are in your experience with Job and his God, you are in the best of company. What sustained and comforted Job in his dark and trying hour, if blessed to that end by the Holy Spirit to your understanding, will also sustain and comfort you.

It is often said that the subject of Job is the answer to the question, "Why do the godly suffer?" This superficial approach falls directly into the free-will trap that says, "You suffer because you have done something wrong. You just need to quit doing wrong, and just start doing right, and your suffering will stop and you'll be walking on the mountain tops, in constant spiritual sunshine, and enjoying all sorts of material blessings."

But far more than the contemplation of why the saints go through periods of darkness, depression, and distress, sometimes bordering even on despair, the book of Job analyzes the free-will arguments of man's worldly religions and advice on how to lift oneself by his own shoestrings.

Four of the best, from the free-will viewpoint, exhaust themselves with a barrage of accusations and arguments aimed at Job, that patient, solitary, suffering saint. Although he remains in darkness and

puzzlement until the very end, by God's grace he remains unshaken by his friends' offered lessons in how to "get right with God" and get back on the right path of blessings, spiritual light, and material prosperity.

I write about Job, not so much to tell you what the book says (which you can read for yourself), as to call your attention to some of the doctrinal points this ancient book emphasizes.

WHERE AND WHEN WAS JOB?

The first verse of the book of Job says he lived in the land of Uz. Uz was a grandson of Shem, son of Noah through Shem's youngest son Aram, as noted in Genesis 10.23. He lived before Abraham, before the tower of Babel. His land has been identified as being southeast of the land of Canaan, east of Edom, in northwest Arabia (see any good Bible map).

Uz lived in the time described in Genesis 10 (See Genesis 10.22ff), and those who have searched out these things say that Job and his friends lived soon after Uz established his territory. Job was most likely a Semite (descendant of Shem) but not an Israelite or a Jew, as he lived long before those terms (rooted in the names of Israel and Judah) were coined.

In the book of Job there are no references to Moses or to the law of Moses, or to Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob, which fact may also indicate Job lived before these patriarchs were born.

How old Job lived to be, that is, his great age, is still another evidence that he lived in that patriarchal era when men lived much longer than in more recent times. His age was comparable to the ages of the men recorded in Genesis 11. "After this [the distress the book bearing his name describes] lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations." The fact that he had grown children (Job 1.2, 4) who had their own homes shows he was not a young man when his trials began.

Job probably lived shortly after the flood of Noah. The experiences of Noah's family during the flood had been passed down to their descendants. Zophar says, "thou shalt forget thy misery, and remember it as waters that pass away (11.16)"; a probable reference to the flood waters' receding.

JOB'S PROSPERITY AND CHARACTER

Job was the richest man around: "His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east."

Job was a mature man with ten grown children—seven sons and three daughters, all of whom had their own homes (or at least the sons did). Job made sacrifices not only for himself but for his children. If he had lived under the law of Moses, he or his friends would have probably referred to the burnt offerings, peace offerings, sin and trespass offerings of the Levitical law; but no such references exist. This is another indication he probably lived long before the Levitical system was instituted under Moses and Aaron.

God said Job was a perfect man and upright. He did not mean perfect in the way we usually think of sinless-perfection holiness, like that of God. Job himself confesses his sin.

God defines what He means by His saying Job was perfect: Job "feared God, and eschewed evil." Eschew is to shun, avoid, abstain from something. In this case, it is the avoidance of evil.

THE MESSAGE OF JOB

The book of Job begins with the behind-the-scenes action between God and Satan. Many casual readers assume it was Satan who began Job's ordeal, as if God and Job were in an easy state of balance, as it were, and Satan came along with a mind to start trouble. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

The conversation between God and Satan was begun by God Himself, as always. God, the First Cause of all causes, acted, and only then did Satan and man react. The truth is opposite of what is almost always presented by man's religion, which is the idea that man acts and God must react.

Since God started it, Satan was only too happy to carry it on. Then, after the scene is set, Satan is heard from no more after Job 2.7.

First and foremost, then, remember: God started it. He has never relinquished His sovereignty. Remember too, this was soon after the flood of Noah. He had a most holy and wise reason for giving this magnificent object-lesson so early after

Noah's family disembarked from the ark. God was here setting a precedent for all future generations.

In the book of Job, the Lord revealed truths that would guide His children for the remainder of the ages between the time He destroyed the world by flood and the time He will yet destroy it by fire.

Almost as soon as Noah's sons were dispersed upon the earth, God raised up Job, positively, and his companions, negatively, as a two-fold benchmark against which all future religions might be tested.

"Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them (1.6)."

The Old Testament saints understood that "the sons of God" refers to angelic beings, and for six centuries into the New Testament era the church uniformly so understood it to be. It was only **after** the leavening, corrupting influence of the Sadducees succeeded in dominating biblical interpretation, and Origen's practice of "spiritualizing" the Scriptures became popular, that the mainstream church abandoned the ancient understanding that these *sons of God* in the Old Testament were *angels*. Since "sons of God" is applied to God's elect in the New Testament, men began applying the term *exclusively* to God's elect among men and ignoring 5,000 years of important revealed truths about the spirit world.

That Satan can appear among the angels should be no surprise, as he is a fallen cherub, "the anointed cherub that covereth (Ezekiel 28.14)." He is still the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4.4), he is yet transformed into an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11.14), and he is yet the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience (Ephesians 2.1ff). Although he is a mighty created being, he is not **almighty**. He is so mighty, however, that Michael the archangel dared not bring a railing accusation against him but said, "The Lord rebuke thee (Jude 9)." Satan, ever under the infinite power and dominion of God, has the kingdoms of this world at his disposal to give to those who worship him. Jesus did not at all deny this point (Luke 4.5-8). There should be no doubt in the saints' minds, as they see the events transpiring in the world every day: There are men who worship Satan for the power he gives them over the world's nations and their finances—for mammon, the love of money, the root of all evil (Luke 16.13, 1 Timothy 6.10).

So, Satan appeared before God. God began the conversation: "And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it (1.7)." This, which is among the earliest of records, and Peter's observation concerning Satan, which is one of the more recent, are alike. Satan's tactics had not changed from Job's time to Peter's, and we have no reason to think they have changed since then. Peter said, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5.8)." It was so in the garden of Eden, when he in effect devoured our first parents (or would have, had the Lord given him leave); it was so in Job's day, and it is so in ours.

Considering Peter, the Lord told him, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat (Luke 22.31)." The Lord does not mention God's giving Satan leave in Peter's case, but it could not have been otherwise. In Job's case, God started the conversation, directing Satan's attention to Job.

"And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil (1.8)?"

Perhaps we have assumed, because Satan delights in devouring whomever he might, that he is the one that initiated the attack on Job, as though it was he who first approached God about Job.

Job was totally unaware of the behind-the-scene actions and conversations taking place. He did not know he was the subject of a major demonstration of grace and preservation that the Lord was providentially developing over against the black backdrop of will-worship.

Nor did Job have the plain assurance spoken face to face to him, as Peter did, directly from the Lord Jesus' mouth, "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren (Luke 22.32)." Job did not know what was going on behind the scenes, but the Lord preserved him nonetheless. You see here that the saints do not have to know everything in order to be preserved by God's grace.

Satan is a living, personal, spirit-being, not merely (as some cults teach) a bad influence within

us, or the corruption of our mortal flesh. Such ideas are still more of the Sadducean heresies. When run to its conclusion, the erroneous idea that Satan is our flesh, or a weakness within our flesh, implies two ugly heresies, at least:

(1) that when “the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul,” this error implies that the flesh of Adam was flawed as it came forth from his Maker’s hands, in spite of God’s pronouncement, “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them... And God saw **every thing that he had made**, and, behold, **it was very good** (Genesis 1.27-31).” This error is the equivalent of charging God with being the author of our sin, a heresy of which Absolute Predestinarians are often accused, and which we everywhere deny: “... (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just (Romans 3.8).”

(2) A second and, if possible, an even greater heresy springing from the error that Satan is our flesh, or merely an evil principle within it, is that—horrid and blasphemous thought!—since Jesus was tempted of Satan, then He must have had sinful flesh. If that were the case, His virgin birth was for naught, he was a mere sinner such as you and I, and we have no hope of a Savior.

“Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land (1.9f).” If we had nothing else to go on, this reply of Satan shows that Satan is not merely our flesh or mind, for neither man’s mind nor man’s flesh could give such a penetratingly accurate appraisal of God’s kind and providential care of His own.

How comforting this consideration should be to the child of God, that even though we cannot see it, Satan can perceive the protective hedge God has placed around His children. Satan cannot violate our God-given space without the Lord’s first lengthening his chain as it pleaseth Him. Satan knows this. We know it, but do we depend on it? May our God grant that we do, for without Him we can do nothing (John 15.5).

The hedge of the Lord’s providence is not only around the saint, but around about his home and all he has on every side. Accompanying this is the blessing of God on whatever secular employment the saint must pursue, and the increase of material blessings while in this world, and all else; and the Lord’s blessings are even upon the men and the businesses that employ His children. Laban told Jacob, “I pray thee, if I have found favour in thine eyes, tarry: for I have learned by experience that the LORD hath blessed me for thy sake (Genesis 30.27).” All these things are in the direct control and the providential disposal of our sovereign God.

“But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face (1.11).” As the Lord God turned the conversation to Job, Satan would have his say; and first and last, Satan is a Conditionalist. His argument is simple and consistent: “Job only worships and serves God for what blessings he gets out of it,” he argues. “If You remove the blessings, then Job will quit worshipping You.”

“And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord (1.12).”

The powers that be are ordained of God: “...For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God... (Romans 13.1),” what men call “good” powers and “bad” powers.

During the trial of Jesus, Pilate...went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, “Whence art thou?” But Jesus gave him no answer. Then saith Pilate unto him, “Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that **I have power** to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?”

Jesus answered, “**Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above...**(John 19.9-11).”

God put Job at the dawn of history to demonstrate to all who have lived since that early day that man is by nature a Conditionalist will-worshiper, of which God disapproves. The Lord, by giving Satan and fleshly religion a sounding-board in the case of Job, demonstrates how it is *not*, the better to show forth how it *is*.

God is neither a Conditionalist, nor does He approve of Conditionalism. God is absolute; what

He does is absolutely unchangeable. It cannot be added to or decreased: Solomon declared, "I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him. That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past (Ecclesiastes 3.14f)." Even when He gave the conditional law covenant through Moses, it was to prove that no man can keep the law or meet conditions to earn blessings. "Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me (John 7.19)?"

JOB'S THREE FRIENDS

There can be no doubt about it: Job's three friends preached what is now known as Arminianism and Conditionalism. Their advice to Job on the surface seems to be sound, but this is so only superficially. This is so because their language is couched in biblical language, and through the centuries their deceptive but convincing arguments, more often than not, have been cited as valid. Free-will advocates quote Bildad and the others unabashedly, but so do many unwary Calvinists and proponents of free grace.

Arminians and Conditionalists might chuckle at the thought of someone who lived thousands of years before Jacobus Arminius being called an Arminian, and those who lived thousands of years before the Fulton Footnotes being called a Conditionalist. Indulge me a moment. Bildad and his fellow theology professors were not disciples of Jacobus Arminius. Arminius was a disciple of Bildad, as are all Conditionalists. Few Arminians wish to be known as such. Not long ago, a friend of *The Remnant* forwarded a note to me written by someone protesting his being identified as an Arminian, saying he doesn't even know what an Arminian is:

I have been called an arminian many times and just wondered where that label stems from. I want to take issue w/ the use of "arminianism" as a catch-all for those who disagree w/ calvinism...I'm sure atheists are not arminian, nor are they calvinists. If someone is not a calvinist, why not just say he is not a calvinist? It ticks me

off when I am thrown in a box that I don't even know anything about....

Jerome Zanchius answered the question "What is Arminianism?" over four hundred years ago, in the year of A.D. 1562, as plainly as anyone has ever defined it:

Conversion and salvation must, in the very nature of things, be wrought and effected either by ourselves alone, or by ourselves and God together, or *solely by God Himself*. The Pelagians were for the first. The Arminians are for the second. True believers are for the last, because the last hypothesis, and that only, is built on the strongest evidence of Scripture, reason and experience: it most effectually hides pride from man, and sets the crown of undivided praise upon the head, or rather casts it at the feet, of that glorious *Triune God*, who worketh all in all. But this is a crown which no sinners ever yet cast before the throne of God who were not first led into the transporting views of His gracious decree to save, freely and of His own will, the people of His eternal love. Exclude, therefore, O Christian, the article of *sovereign predestination* from thy ministry or from thy faith, and acquit thyself if thou art able from the charge of robbing God.—**Absolute Predestination**, by Jerome Zanchius, Chapter 5, III, (3) (Italic emphases by Zanchius).

Zanchius' definition of Arminianism is historically and theologically accurate. "The Arminians are for the second" position, he says, that "Conversion and salvation must...be wrought and effected...by ourselves and God together." Whether one says our conversion and salvation are wrought and effected ninety-nine percent by ourselves and one percent by God, or ninety-nine percent by God and one percent by ourselves, it matters not. *Anyone who takes the position that our conversion and salvation are part of man and part of God, however the parts are allotted, is, by plain, strict definition, an Arminian.*

Why do we count the Conditionalist “Primitive” Baptists as Arminians? Because that is what they are, by definition—Arminians. We do not say that out of animosity; rather, for the sake of accuracy, we cannot say anything less. Typically, and to illustrate this point, one of their Elders recently wrote to one of our correspondents:

I have a rule I use to try and understand Scripture and determine IF a particular passage is speaking about Time or Gospel Salvation versus Eternal Life or Eternal Salvation. That rule is:

If the passage has any words in it requiring man TO DO something in order to obtain the salvation being spoken of - then it is teaching Time or Gospel salvation [*sic*] which is based on obedience, and NOT Eternal Life which is bestowed upon the Elect by God without any works or action on their part.

This Conditionalist Elder later says:

In I Corinthians 15:1-2 reads, “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.”

In this passage we see The Gospel as a means of being SAVED - but notice that the Gospel was preached to “Brethren” and **the SAVING is conditioned** upon “keeping in memory what was preached”. This **obviously** cannot be speaking of Eternal Life — for then all who grow old and fail in memory would lose the gift of eternal life. **Obviously** it is speaking about **Time Salvation based on ones [*sic*] remembering** or renewing of their minds (Rom. 12:2) **and their obedience to Truth**. I could give you many other examples, but these may suffice. [bold emphasis supplied—Ed.]

Our readers will note the Elder believes in a “Time Salvation” or a “Gospel Salvation,” with

capital letters, in addition to an “Eternal Salvation,” with capital letters, as though he is speaking of proper names. Strange. Perhaps Jude should have given “...all diligence to write unto you of the common salvationS (Jude 3).” No doubt he would have, if there were more than one salvation in the Bible. Salvation is complete in Christ. “Eternal salvation” begins, in our experience, in time; “time salvation” extends *eternally* into eternity: “...He which hath **begun** [that’s *timely* salvation] a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ [that’s *eternal* salvation] (Philippians 1.6).” They are (or, **it is**) one and the same salvation provided by the Lord Jesus Christ, spanning both time and eternity. **One** salvation.

As long as the Limited Predestinarians (Conditionalists) preach and teach a “Time Salvation” and say man can help or hinder it by what he does or does not do, or as this Elder puts it, “the SAVING is conditioned upon “keeping in memory what was preached...and their obedience to the truth”—as long as they advocate such errors, as long as they say conversion and salvation must be wrought and effected by ourselves and God together, we accord them the rank and title of what they are, **Arminians**. Like this Conditional Elder, I, too, could give you many other examples (I collect them), but this will have to suffice.

The religion of these four men—Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar, and Elihu—is one of prosperity and blessings conditioned on free-will obedience to God’s commands; “If you will only do right,” each says, in effect, “God will bless you with an abundance of material wealth.” When the time comes, we need not go into a lot of detail to prove this. We will lift a few quotes from each man out of all their speeches to prove their doctrine, and to see how Job responds. Then we will take a look at what God says about their pious-sounding expressions.

On the surface, what Job’s friends say sounds biblically good: “Do what is right, don’t do what is wrong, and don’t be a hypocrite. God is big and strong, and He judges and punishes evil.” What is wrong with that? Every statement is biblically true, is it not? Indeed.

All of these points are surely biblical truths, but Job’s friends used them in wrong applications, taking them out of context, making wrong implica-

tions, and going beyond the uniform doctrine of grace. A favorite Arminian saying is, “*God does not require anything of us that we cannot perform.*” Lie of the devil! God **always** and only requires what is impossible for the natural man to perform, in order to demonstrate our helpless dependency upon Him. We, no more and no less than wicked Belshazzar, are weighed in the balances and found wanting, that we should rather be the objects of the Lord’s grace, mercy, and long-suffering in Christ Jesus.

Another problem of Job’s friends was their judging by outward appearance. “Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment (John 7.24).” The natural man judges by the sight of the natural eye and by what he hears with the natural ear. Job’s friends sized up the situation and wrongly concluded from their fleshly understanding of religion that surely Job was guilty of something, or else God would not be punishing him so.

Further, we are not even to judge one another at all: “Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again (Matthew 7.1f).” “Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven (Luke 6.37).” We simply do not know all the circumstances behind the scenes. Only an all-wise God knows the purpose of the ordeals through which He calls us to go. Sometimes the reason is revealed to us or to others in later years. Sometimes we will never know in this life, but we are assured that God controls all things for His own honor and glory and for the good of His children.

Perhaps Job, in the spirit of Paul, could have said to his companions, “But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man’s judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self (1 Corinthians 4.3).”

Much of what Bildad and his companions say is not said plainly and forthrightly; it is only implied. For instance, they did not say that Job’s children were killed either because of Job’s sin or the children’s sins, but these men implied the one and the other in their arguments.

In his opening statement, Job curses the day he was born (chapter 3), asking why he did not die at birth. Even in his suffering, though, he confesses his

belief that God has him hedged in (3.23). “Why is light given to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in?”

WHAT ELIPHAZ SAYS

Eliphaz speaks three times, in chapters 4 and 5, chapter 15, and chapter 22.

1—Chapters 4 and 5: Eliphaz, in his opening attack on Job’s character, argues from the beginning that Job is not innocent. Job, he says, has counseled others in their troubles; but now, when trouble comes to him, he can’t take it (4.4f). “Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees. But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.”

“Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off? Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same (4.7f).” On the surface this seems to be the Old Testament equivalent of Galatians 6.7f: “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.” Because of the haughty spirit in which Eliphaz says it, however, it is only so much free-will babble. The Arminian may quote Eliphaz as an authority on cleaning up our lives, but after seeing what God said about him, Eliphaz’s worldly religion is to be shunned.

From the beginning, Eliphaz is an object-lesson in how not to judge people by the calamities which befall them. Late last September there were many religionists saying that the World Trade Center tragedy was God’s judgment because of this or that specific sin of the people involved, or of New York City, or of the United States of America. The ones so judging their peers were of the mind and spirit of Eliphaz.

That our supposedly “Christian nation” has grievously departed from its biblical heritage no one can deny. But to say the Twin Towers tragedy was God’s specific judgment on individuals who perished therein is going beyond what Scriptures and divine revelation warrant. Jesus once asked a self-righteous crowd, “... those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that

they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish (Luke 13.4f).” It is extremely shallow to think because someone has suffered an injury, illness, or violent death that this is God’s “dealings” with that person because of sin not repented of and not forsaken.

Nor is it only unrepentant sinners who die. God’s own children suffer and die all the time, as well as the reprobates, and in all manner of ways. They do not all die resting on downy pillows with their loving families gathered around and softly weeping. Throughout the centuries, uncounted millions of martyrs have died horrible, torturous deaths for the name and cause of Christ and His truth, and multitudes more will die as martyrs for His sake before the end comes.

Eliphaz speaks, falling back on his experience. In chapter 4, he tells of a scary vision or dream he saw. Once, an apparition came to him in the night, in a dream or vision that made him shiver with goosebumps. When he saw it, he says “the hair of my flesh stood up.” Whatever he saw, when it spoke, it said God had condemned certain angels; how much less could a mortal man be just before God (4.17)?

In fairness to Eliphaz and others who lived in the days before the Scriptures were given, they had no Bible in which they might find a record of the Lord’s dealings with men. Dreams and visions were used of God in those days before the Bible. God did indeed condemn the rebellious angels of prehistory (Luke 10.18; 2 Peter 2.4; Jude 6, 9), as the mysterious appearance told him. Likewise, the doctrine of the depravity of man as Eliphaz sets forth is essentially sound. That is one reason Arminian/Conditionalist arguments are so dangerous to the unwary mind: they mingle error in with the truth.

God’s people are not dependent on dreams now. If a dream is the best a person has to go on, so be it; but “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts (2 Peter 1.19).”

Job’s response to Eliphaz’s dream was, he also had seen scary things in the night: “When I say, My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint; then thou scarest me with dreams, and

terrifiest me through visions: so that my soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than my life (Job 7.13ff).”

Much of Eliphaz’s attack on Job is indirect and only implied. He does not say his friend Job is foolish and crafty, but he implies that he is. “For wrath killeth the **foolish** man, and envy slayeth the **silly** one. I have seen the **foolish** taking root: but suddenly I cursed his habitation. *His children are far from safety, and they are crushed in the gate, neither is there any to deliver them* (Job 5.2-4).” “He disappointeth the devices of the **crafty**, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise. He taketh the wise in their own **craftiness**: and the counsel of the **froward** is carried headlong (verse 12-13).”

His insinuation is terrible. Remember, Job’s ten children had so recently been crushed to death. Now, Eliphaz implies that Job’s children, who were *crushed* in the collapse of the eldest son’s house during a tornado, were crushed as God’s punishment of Job for his sinful foolishness, his foolish sinfulness.

Such judgmental Pharisees as Eliphaz never lack for advice to give the suffering ones. He advises Job as to what *he* would do if he were in Job’s stead. This is what I’D do, if I were you, Job: “*I* would seek unto God, and unto God would *I* commit my cause (verse 8).”

When he answers Eliphaz, Job says, “To him that is afflicted pity should be showed from his friend; but he [the friend] forsaketh the fear of the Almighty. My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, and as the stream of brooks they pass away; which are blackish by reason of the ice, and wherein the snow is hid: what time they wax warm, they vanish: when it is hot, they are consumed out of their place (6.14-17).”

Beware of black ice. It is thin and treacherous, and the waters beneath it are cold, swift, deep, fatal. Then, in the heat of summer, the very time you so desperately need that deep, cold water, the stream dries up. Self-righteous friends are like that. Where are they when you most need a friend?

“Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth,” says Eliphaz; “therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty: for he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole. He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee (5.17-19).”

This sounds like a mix of Hebrews 12.5-7, Hannah's prayer and praise (2 Samuel 2.6-9), and something from Isaiah. What makes it *wrong* is, Eliphaz continues judging Job by outward appearance, saying what has happened to you and your family is because God is punishing you. He tops it off by saying, "Lo this, we have searched it, so it is; hear it, and **know thou it for thy good** (5.27)." Mimicking Old Baptist doctrine, he as much as says here, "It may not be good *to* you, Job, but it's good *for* you. Remember Romans 8.28. And we know that *all things* work together for good...."

Job replies, "Did I say, Bring unto me? or, Give a reward for me of your substance?"

Did I ask you for anything? Did I invite you to come over here to accuse me falsely and unjustly? Did I say, "Deliver me from the enemy's hand"? or, "Redeem me from the hand of the mighty"? Job's lament is that he has asked nothing from Eliphaz and his friends, and that is exactly what they give him: nothing.

"Do ye imagine to reprove words, and the speeches of one that is desperate, which are as wind?" Job asks of Eliphaz (6.26); he feels his words of desperation are as insubstantial as the wind.

Appealing once again to the sovereignty of God, Job asks, "Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth? are not his days also like the days of an hireling (7.1)?" Yes, but in what way?

Job's reference to an appointed time is a theme rooted in what we delight to call "the absolute predestination of all things," to which he returns repeatedly. "The days of an hireling" is an ideal illustration of the exactly appointed days, hours, minutes, and seconds we must fulfill here below. A hireling servant was often abused by a cruel master, and would not work for him one day or even one second longer than his contract required. On the other hand, the master would not release the hireling one second earlier than the contract required. Job says our appointed time on earth is like that. It can neither be lengthened nor diminished by one second. "So [in like manner] am I **made** to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are **appointed** to me (7.3)." "Made," to say the least, implies an outside power stronger than himself. This power is God and is of God, and Job says so throughout the book. Seven different times Job refers to the Almighty

God's **appointments** of the details of his life, his time on earth, his "wearisome nights," his days, his months, his bounds, his death, and his resurrection.

"O remember that my life is wind," Job says, again referring to the wind as a picture of the fleeting nature of life.

In his closing words after answering Eliphaz, he turns his speech away from men and addresses his God (7.12-21). He confesses his fears, his desire for death, and his sin, which should forever remove any doubt, if anyone still thinks God meant Job was *sinless* when He called him "perfect" (1.8, 2.3): "**I have sinned**; what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men? why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself? And why dost thou not pardon **my transgression**, and take away **mine iniquity**? (7.20f)."

2—In chapter 15, Eliphaz returns and advances an argument often used by older men who are wrong against younger men who are right: "With us are both the grayheaded and very aged men, much elder than thy father." As if being an older man means he automatically has to be right in all he thinks, does, and says. Even the young Elihu (who might have been put down by this pretentious argument on more than one occasion) said, when his turn to speak came, "Great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgment (32.9)."

His doctrine of depravity is well expressed and generally correct: "What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous? Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight. How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water (15.14ff)?" The problem is, his specific application is judgmental and wrong.

In verses 20-35, Eliphaz describes the wicked, calling them "him," "they," and "he"; but it is obvious he is implying that Job is wicked.

Job, in his reply (chapter 16), becomes a beautiful figure of Christ's suffering in His innocence. His words are prophetic of the Savior's sufferings. As you read Job's pitiful words, think of Jesus as He is portrayed in the Psalms, the Prophets, and the gospels: "He teareth me in his wrath, who hateth me: he gnasheth upon me with his teeth; mine enemy sharpeneth his eyes upon me. They have gaped upon

me with their mouth; they have smitten me upon the cheek reproachfully; they have gathered themselves together against me. God hath delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over into the hands of the wicked. I was at ease, but he hath broken me asunder: he hath also taken me by my neck, and shaken me to pieces, and set me up for his mark. His archers compass me round about, he cleaveth my reins asunder, and doth not spare; he poureth out my gall upon the ground. He breaketh me with breach upon breach, he runneth upon me like a giant...My face is foul with weeping, and on my eyelids is the shadow of death; not for any injustice in mine hands: also my prayer is pure. O earth, cover not thou my blood, and let my cry have no place. Also now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high. My friends scorn me: but mine eye poureth out tears unto God (verses 9-20)."

3—In chapter 22 Eliphaz returns in the full strength of the Phariseeism of his day, saying: "Is not thy wickedness great? and thine iniquities infinite?" It seems that what started as some friendly criticism and advice has developed into a full-fledged fight. He now accuses Job of preposterous crimes against humanity, crimes of which Job was by no means guilty: "For thou hast taken a pledge from thy brother for nought, and stripped the naked of their clothing. Thou hast not given water to the weary to drink, and thou hast withholden bread from the hungry...Thou hast sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless have been broken. *Therefore* snares are round about thee, and sudden fear troubleth thee; Or darkness, that thou canst not see; and abundance of waters cover thee."

Who can miss his argument that Job must have done wrong, and **therefore** what has happened to him is punishment for it? The classic free-will position can scarcely be expressed without using the words *if*, *then*, and *therefore*.

In verse 6, Eliphaz accuses Job of specific crimes, utterly without any reason. Eliphaz says Job has stripped the naked of their clothing. (He does not explain how the naked would have clothing and still not use it—notice, he doesn't say Job stripped *clothed* people, leaving them naked.)

Eliphaz does his bit for teaching Job to know the Lord, something foreign to the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31.31ff). "Acquaint now thyself with

him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee. Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart (22.21f)."

"**IF** thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles. **THEN** shalt thou lay up gold as dust, and the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brooks. Yea, the Almighty shall be thy defence, and thou shalt have plenty of silver. For **THEN** shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God. Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee, and thou shalt pay thy vows. Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee: and the light shall shine upon thy ways. When men are cast down, then thou shalt say, There is lifting up; and he shall save the humble person. He shall deliver the island of the innocent: and it is delivered by the pureness of thine hands (22.23-30)."

Job's answer to Eliphaz's remarks in chapter 22 is, "But He [God] is in one mind, and who can turn Him? and what His soul desireth, even that He doeth. For He performeth the thing that is appointed for me: and many such things are with Him. Therefore am I troubled at His presence: when I consider, I am afraid of Him. For God maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me (23.13-16)."

While God hardens others' hearts, He softens the hearts of His people. He does so by giving them fearful yet sweet meditations on His sovereign appointments in the smallest details of our lives. Will-worshipers cannot fear God as does the one who believes in the Lord's absolute control over all things.

WHAT BILDAD SAYS

Bildad speaks three times, in chapters 8, 18, and 25.

1.—Chapter 8.1ff: Bildad first makes the cruel suggestion that God killed Job's children because of Job's sin: "Doth God pervert judgment? or doth the Almighty pervert justice? If thy children have sinned against him, and he have cast them away for their transgression; if thou wouldest seek unto God betimes, and make thy supplication to the Almighty; If thou wert pure and upright; surely now he would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous (8.3-6)."

“Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man, neither will he help the evil doers (8.20).” If you do not want God to cast you away, be perfect. If you want God’s help, don’t be an evil doer. Bildad’s doctrine is as simple as that.

Job’s reply to that is, God in His sovereignty does as He pleases with the righteous no less than with the wicked: “This is one thing, therefore I said it, He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked (9.22).”

In Chapters 18 and 25, Bildad has little to add to what he has already said in chapter 8, or to what his companions, Eliphaz and Zophar, have said and yet will say. We next turn to Zophar.

(To be continued, Lord willing)

—C. C. Morris

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Matt Poole, the son of Elder J. F. Poole, has spent much time and effort on this project. We think he now has these overprint problems repaired and thank him for his efforts. If you have computer access to the Internet and have not visited our site lately, please do so. If you note any problems, please notify me by e-mail.

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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 condemnation; 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.