

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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JUSTIFICATION

Justification is an act of God’s free grace by which the elect are accepted as righteous in the sight of God, because the righteousness of Christ has been imputed or accounted to them. God has pronounced all those for whom Christ died innocent of all offenses. “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Romans 3.24).” In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace (Ephesians 1.7).”

Man cannot justify or make himself innocent before God by his good behavior or by the performance of benevolent acts. “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified (Galatians 2.16).” No act of obedience on the part of sinners can make them right in God’s eyes. “Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness (Romans 4.4-5).” Since none can make God a debtor, it must be all of grace.

“And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work (Romans 11.6).” Salvation from first to last, including the justification of the elect, is all of sovereign

free grace. This is where Old School Baptists and the large majority of the religious world differ significantly.

Most sects of Christianity believe strongly that they must contribute something to their salvation. They have been taught they must cooperate with God in their salvation. Man must recommend himself to the Lord by acts he performs, to get into and remain in his good graces. “But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, 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; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life (Titus 3.4-7).” The Scriptures plainly declare that a merciful and gracious God justifies man.

Justification was ever in the eternal purpose of Jehovah God. The will of God to justify his people chosen in Christ, was from all eternity. If one can tell when in eternity the Father chose a people in the Son, then one may also pinpoint the moment the elect were determined innocent in the mind of God. “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall

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we then say to these things? If God be for us who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth (Romans 8.29)."

In Adam all mankind were pronounced guilty and condemned under the law. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive (1 Corinthians 15.22)."

Nevertheless, from all eternity the elect were chosen in Christ their Head, and, being united to him, they were deemed *righteous in Christ*. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit (Romans 8.1)." "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved (Ephesians 1.3, 6)." Every spiritual blessing the elect receive, including justification, is because of their eternal union with Christ.

Though purposed eternally by God our Saviour, the act that brought justification was accomplished in time. Jesus Christ the Righteous came into this world to save sinners by His active and passive obedience. "After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put

it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost (John 28-30).” “Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification (Romans 4.25).”

According to the eternal purpose of God this work was absolutely sure to occur. Christ having assumed the office of High Priest and Mediator for the elect, he also became their Surety of salvation. “By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament (Hebrews 7.22).” How could God know this was to take place as purposed? The Lord himself brought it to pass. “Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world (Acts 15.18).” Again, “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done (Acts 2.23, 4.28).”

From eternity the act of justification was considered as good as done. “Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second by the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified (Hebrews 10.9-14).”

Justification, though completed in time by the works of the Lord Jesus Christ, was predestinated from all eternity. It was fixed, certain, and sure to come to pass by the will of Almighty God. Man contributes nothing to his justification.

Some reading this may ask the question, does not my faith in Jesus justify me before God? Faith, being the gift of God, cannot make one innocent in God’s eyes. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God (Ephesians 2.8).” Faith is the instrument by which the elect take hold of the work that the Lord Jesus completed on their behalf. Faith is that which enables sinners to receive Christ as their redeemer, Saviour, and the one who died in their place to appease the justice of an offended

God. “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him (2 Corinthians 5.21).”

The Apostle Paul gives the example of Abraham as one justified by faith. “He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness (Romans 4.20-22).” Not because he had faith but through faith he was enabled to apprehend or claim the promise of God. Faith was only the tool that Abraham used, and God provided this tool.

Sinners are only justified by faith in the sense that God graciously enables them to believe on and trust in the completed work of Christ on their behalf. The active and passive obedience of the Mediator of the church is the only thing that makes them righteous before God. “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law (Romans 3.23-28).” Not by law but by the grace of God in Jesus. “...but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God (1 Corinthians 6.11).”

When sinners are first made alive by the operations of the Spirit and begin to feel the inner corruptions of their heart, the law of commandments is the first refuge they seek. After a season of worship at Sinai, they discover that the commandments of the law only serve to magnify the filth within their flesh. Gradually they become more and more aware of their impotency to render themselves righteous before God. This period of time may be shorter for some and longer for others. They finally discover no deliverance in the law but only condemnation. Nevertheless, when it pleases God to reveal his Son in the sinner; when the sin sick one is blessed to behold Jesus in his sufferings; and in his triumph over death, hell, and the grave, the child of grace views in the finished work of the Lamb a

complete and finished salvation that is sufficient for all things that he lacks in himself. "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption (1 Corinthians 1.30)." "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God (2 Corinthians 3.5)."

Faith is the evidence of the work of salvation in the saint. Faith is a fruit or product of the Holy Spirit, which indwells the person. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith (Galatians 5.22)." If faith is present, this indicates the sentence of justification has already been pronounced. Thus the act of believing in order to be justified comes too late. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God (1 Peter 1.18-21)."

"Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance (Hebrews 9.12-15)."

From eternity God the Father had determined to punish all the sins of his elect in the person of his Son. Likewise, the Son assumed the office of Mediator and bore all the punishment for the sin of his people in his body. "Surely he hath born our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone

astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53.4-6)." The prophet speaks here in the past tense as if these works had already occurred; even though Isaiah prophesied centuries before the crucifixion took place.

As spoken by Isaiah the prophet, it also came to pass in God's predetermined time. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him (Romans 5.6, 9)." It is through the blood of Christ, or his active and passive obedience, offered to the Father on behalf of the elect, that they have peace with God. "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement (Romans 5.10)." Jesus rendered satisfaction to the justice of God by his perfect obedience in life and humble submission unto death. The proof of this was when God raised him from the dead. "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it... This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses (Acts 2. 24, 32)."

In agreement with the word spoken by Isaiah, Peter wrote, "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls (1 Peter 2.21-25)."

Though justification is a legal or judicial act by God, there is an effect upon the ones judged to be innocent. The spiritually alive child of grace is enabled by faith to embrace the finished work of Christ. Faith compels the sin sick soul to forsake the efforts of the flesh and to cling to Christ for its righteous standing before God. "That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of

God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption (1 Corinthians 1.29-30).” All of the children of God, who have been taught of the Spirit, know beyond a doubt that they are not free from commission of sin. “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us (1 John 1.8, 10).” Nevertheless, God has declared all of the elect innocent in Christ. “Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world (1 John 4.17).”

In simple terms, God views the Son and the elect as one. As writers of old have declared, this is an unspeakable and inexplicable thing. This cannot fully be grasped nor understood by mortals. “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body...For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones...This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church (Ephesians 5.23, 30, 32).” The Father beholds the completed work of the Son and is satisfied with it. The delight God has in Christ he also has in those that are in Christ. He considers them all one and all glorious in his sight. “That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish (Ephesians 5.27).” This is called the law of imputation.

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offense, so also is the free gift. For if through the offense of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offenses unto justification. For if by one man’s offense death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the

righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous (Romans 5.12-19).”

“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross...(Colossians 1.20).” Because of the powerful and efficacious work of Jesus Christ two thousand years ago on the cross of Calvary, the ones whom God had chosen in his Son from eternity receive the blessings ordained for them from before the foundation of the world. “And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus (Philippians 4.7).” “And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement (Romans 5.11).”

Various and assorted Conditionalists assert that there are numerous phases or parts to justification. They claim one of these phases to be that of which James speaks. “But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only (James 2.20-24).” It should be clear from the context that the actions performed by the patriarch Abraham served as evidences that he was a man in possession of faith.

It is claimed, however, that these works serve to justify the Christian before men. This is simply not the case. Works performed in faith serve only to glorify God who is the author of them. “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven (Matthew 5.16).” The works of faith originate with the Three-In-One God. “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2.10).” Again, “LORD, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us (Isaiah 26.12).”

They also serve as proof to the child of God and other Christians that he is in possession of a true and

living faith. “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue... Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall (2 Peter 1.3, 10).” The works performed by the children of God do not and cannot justify them in any way; but are evidences of salvation and justification bestowed on them by the Triune God. The world of the reprobate and ungodly care nothing for the children of God and even less for their works.

The Conditionalists claim there is more than one salvation; and that God is the author of one, and man of the other. They also allege that some form of justification lies within the power of man. Eternal salvation, they say, is the work completely of God. With this we strongly agree. Even so, they assert that “time or gospel salvation” is entirely the work of man. It seems consistent with their system of works that there is some type of justification that remains for man to accomplish. Nonetheless, this writer believes this position to be erroneous and derogatory to the glory and honor of the sovereign, eternal, omnipotent God.

While it is obvious that there are many incomprehensible facets to the salvation of the elect, salvation and all things that accompany it is the work of the Eternal Almighty Godhead, “In whom also we have 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).” Sinful man must not take the least credit for any of the works of grace bestowed upon them by the mercy of a righteous and holy God.

“For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least

to the greatest. *For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more (Hebrews 8.8-12).*”

“Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen... The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen (Philippians 4.20, 23).”

—Elder Bruce Atkisson

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CERTAIN

(PART 3, Conclusion)

(continued from last issue)

PAUL IN PHILIPPI

27. “And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding **certain days** (Acts 16:12).”

Paul had to be not merely in Macedonia but in Philippi the chief city these certain days, because God was bringing him together with Lydia and others of that city, including the demon-possessed damsel (point 29 below), and the Philippian jailor with his household. These all would later constitute the church in Philippi, at that *certain time and place*. Had Paul earlier been given free reign to go into Asia, Bithynia, or wherever else he might have “decided”—humanly speaking—to go, then (again, humanly speaking) none of what follows in Acts 16 would have taken place. Further, there would have been no occasion for Paul’s letter to the Philippians to have been written, and our Bible would not be what it is. All of this and more hinges on whether or not Paul is in this certain city, in a certain area of that city, at a certain time! The discerning, God-blessed eye will see the handiwork of the Lord in bringing all these things together in the one way that suits His purpose.

28. “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).” Lydia, a business-

woman from Thyatira (a city of Asia Minor, by the way, where the Holy Spirit had earlier forbidden Paul and his friends to go), was in the city of Philippi on business, as Philippi was a major city and trade center of the Roman Empire in those days. Had her business taken her to any other city at that time, she would not have met the apostle Paul. Her going elsewhere was impossible, of course, because “A man’s [or a woman’s] heart deviseth his [or her] way: but the LORD directeth his [or her] steps (Proverbs 16.9).” “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).”

The Lord opened Lydia’s heart that she attended—or paid attention—unto the things which were spoken of Paul. It was not the things that Paul spoke that opened her heart, nor did Lydia open her own heart. Anyone exposed to radio and television Arminianism has heard men urging their hearers to “open their hearts and let Jesus come in.” Such foolishness is foreign to the Scriptures. **Lydia is the only one spoken of in the Bible as having his or her heart opened, and it was the Lord, not Lydia or Paul, who opened her heart.**

29. “And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, **a certain damsel** possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying (Acts 16:16).” Once more, it is a *certain* one who met *certain* qualifications: She was possessed of an evil spirit, a slave to owners who made gain at her expense, owners powerful enough and influential enough in that community to have Paul and Silas arrested, beaten, and imprisoned. No other damsel met these requirements. No other slave-owners fit the necessary providential details that would so bring Paul and Silas into this particular relationship with the Philippian jailor and his household. All this led to the founding of the Philippian church, to which Paul later wrote his beautiful letter we call “Philippians.” And all this was brought about in God’s grace and providence by His arranging for *certain* people to be at *certain* places at a *certain* time.

PAUL IN THESSALONICA

30. “But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them **certain lewd fellows** of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought

to bring them out to the people (Acts 17:5).” This occurred in Thessalonica after Paul had left Philippi and had gone on to other cities. In Thessalonica, Paul preached in the Jews’ synagogue for three Sabbath days, reasoning out of the Scriptures, “Opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.” It was then that the unbelieving Jews hired these *certain* thugs to riot against Paul and his followers.

Again, this mob had to be, and it was composed of *certain* men who, acting out their depravity, must fulfill their course (and the course of Paul and the church) no less than did Esau, Pharaoh, or Judas as they fulfilled their wicked lives. Without these *certain* lewd fellows forcing Paul (speaking again after the manner of men) to go on to Athens at the appointed time, God’s timetable would have been interrupted, which we know cannot be. Without *everything* working together in Philippi, Thessalonica, and everywhere else, including his being run out of Thessalonica, then not only would Paul’s sermon on Mars Hill in Athens been off schedule, but there would have been no occasion for Paul to have written his first two letters, First and Second Thessalonians.

31. “And when they found them not, they drew Jason and **certain brethren** unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also (Acts 17:6).” Who these *certain* brethren were, other than one of the disciples named Jason, we do not know. God knows, because God’s children, including these *certain* brethren, were “given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake (Philippians 1.29).” We do not always think of suffering persecution as a gift of God, but it is, and it is reserved for those *certain ones* to whom God would give it.

PAUL IN ATHENS

32. “Then **certain philosophers** of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babblers say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection (Acts 17:18).” In the providence of God, He raised up *certain* loud-mouthed, presumptuous, arrogant philosophers to so publicly mock Paul as to provide both a foil and a backdrop for one of the greatest

sermons He ever gave to a man to preach and to men to hear.

33. “For thou bringest **certain strange things** to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean (Acts 17:20).” These *certain* “strange things” Paul brought to their ears involved his disputing “in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him” over the fact that “he saw the city wholly given to idolatry” (Acts 17:16f). The “certain strange things” he presented to them were the elements of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

34. “For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as **certain also of your own poets** have said, ‘*For we are also his offspring*’ (Acts 17:28).”

The quotation is from Aratus, a Greek poet, who was a native of Cilicia, a circumstance which would, perhaps, account for St. Paul’s familiarity with his writings. His astronomical poems were so celebrated, that Ovid declares his fame will live as long as the sun and moon endure. How little did the Athenian audience imagine that the poet’s immortality would really be owing to the quotation made by the despised provincial [i.e., Paul—Ed.] who addressed them. Nearly the same words occur also in the hymn of Cleanthes. The opening lines of this hymn have been thus translated:—

‘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 Almighty
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.*’

—From *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*,
W. J. Conybeare and J. S. Howson, Eerdmans,
1954, page 293, note 3.

Is it not of surpassing interest that Paul, when speaking to the Athenian philosophers, **never once quoted from the sacred Old Testament Scriptures**

one verse, not one word from the Bible? How do the “gospel regeneration” people—those who believe God’s children are regenerated or “born again” by having Bible-quotes drummed into their ears—how do they explain why Paul did not quote John 3.16, or quote from Isaiah, or from the Psalms of David at least once, in order (according to their view) to get these pagan philosophers born again? Instead, he quoted from *certain of your own poets*, a hymn to Zeus, one of the gods of Mount Olympus! Yet, in spite of this,

35. “...**certain men** clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them (Acts 17:34).” The Lord was in the matter, and He quickened Brother Dionysius and Sister Damaris, and others with them, to new life in Christ.

Since these “**certain men**” included Dionysius plus at least one other man with him, and the woman Damaris is named, making three so far, and the words “others with them” implies at least two more, we know a church of at least five members was founded in Athens before Paul left for Corinth. All this was without a single quote from “the word of God,” the Old Testament Scriptures; the conversion of these Athenians and the founding of their little church was accomplished by the direct, sovereign act of the Holy Spirit bringing these *certain ones* to Christ.

PAUL IN CORINTH

36. “After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; and found a **certain Jew named Aquila**, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them (Acts 18:1-2).”

Aquila and Priscilla figured prominently in Paul’s latter ministry. They had “lately” come from Italy, arriving exactly on time according to God’s schedule. From a providential standpoint, it took the emperor Claudius’ commanding all Jews to depart from Rome to get this one *certain Jew* named Aquila and his wife Priscilla to Corinth, where Paul was. This was no less a matter of divine timing than was the decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed (Luke 2.1), which occurred at the exact appointed time that would bring Joseph and Mary to the city of Bethlehem so that Jesus would be born there, fulfilling the prophecy that, in the fullness of time, He would be

born in the city of David. The rulers of this world, and the decrees they make, are all under the sovereign control of our God.

From the time Paul first met them, and from then on, his newfound friends Aquila and Priscilla were of tremendous assistance to the apostle. They later sailed with him from Corinth to Syria on his final trip to Jerusalem (18.18). They were instrumental, in God's providence, in expounding to Apollos (#38, below), the way of God "more perfectly" than what he had been preaching (18.26). When Paul later wrote to the church in Rome, he asked the brethren there to "Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus (Romans 16.3)" (evidently Claudius' expulsion did not keep them out of Rome forever). When Paul wrote back to the church in Corinth, they were still with him, because he sent word for them to the church: "Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house (1 Corinthians 16.19)"; from which we also gather that they furnished their home as a meeting-place for the local church.

In the last letter Paul ever wrote before his execution on the Roman chopping-block, he asked Timothy to "Salute Prisca and Aquila...(2 Timothy 4.19)." What a wonderful manifestation of the grace of God in the lives of this *certain* couple.

37. "And he departed thence, and entered into a **certain man's house, named Justus**, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue (Acts 18:7)." Think for a moment. From the human standpoint, if there were not this certain man, then suppose there were no man at all? Suppose it were a man who did not worship God? Suppose this uncertain man's house did not adjoin the synagogue? Where would this uncertain man be, and where were his uncertain house-location? In the meantime, where would Justus be, and where would Paul be? We can certainly see how the humanistic principle of random uncertainty degenerates into chaos and confusion in a world where anything might happen, but nothing certain comes to pass. As it was, there was a certain man named Justus, who was in God's appointed place at the exact right time, and Justus was of great material help and comfort to the apostle Paul in those troublesome times.

38. "And a **certain Jew named Apollos**, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus (Acts 18:24)." This

certain Jew was so prominent in the Lord's administration of His grace, that the Lord made him—Apollos—an important minister in the Corinthian church (Acts 19.1). He was a powerful speaker who "knew his Bible" well, especially after Aquila and Priscilla "expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly." He was so popular in the church at Corinth that factions within the church tried to contrast him with Paul, Peter (Cephas), and even Christ Himself (1 Corinthians 1.12f).

Paul, not at all hesitant to name names, used this very fact as an illustration of the Corinthian church's carnality and point them back to God in Christ, saying, "For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase (1 Corinthians 3.4-6)." Then, in a frame of mind similar to his closing verses in Romans 8, he closes this chapter with these amazing words: "Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's (verses 21ff)."

39. "And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding **certain disciples**...(Acts 19:1)." These Ephesian disciples who had been baptized years earlier in the order of John the Baptist, and now being somewhat isolated from Judea, had heard nothing of the gift of the Holy Spirit at the time of Pentecost (as recorded in Acts 2). "And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied." This was a necessary step to complete the relationships of the many different groups—Jews, Samaritans, Gentiles, and this little company of almost-forgotten disciples of John the Baptist—to early Christianity. These *certain* disciples were here, in God's providence, for that reason.

WE COULD GO ON...

...but the point has been made. There remains nineteen other uses of the word "certain" in Acts, to which we would call your attention. These may be classed under several headings. (In grouping these final occurrences, their numerical order—40 through

58—will necessarily be disrupted, but they are numbered in the order in which they occur in the book of Acts):

A. Certain enemies of Paul and the church:

Much of what has been said about Paul's certain enemies in earlier chapters applies as well to these men; however, we will comment on a few details about some of these adversaries:

40. "Then **certain of the vagabond Jews**, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth (Acts 19:13)." These traveling men tried to incorporate casting out demons, as Paul did, into their act. The demons prevailed against these phony magicians, with the result that "this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified (Acts 19:17)." Here is another example of how God providentially brings good results out of man's evil intent, proving once again that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

41. Demetrius the silversmith (Acts 19:24): "For a **certain man named Demetrius**, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen (Acts 19:24)." This man took it upon himself to try to save his business of making silver idols by striving to destroy Paul. He had many fellow craftsmen whose livelihoods were affected along with that of Demetrius.

Someone might object that it did not have to be Demetrius, because if it were not him, some other man would have taken the lead in opposing Paul. Such a dodge misses the point: It had to be Demetrius, because he was *certain* to have been the one. If anyone can prove he was not *certain* to have been the leader against Paul, he could as easily prove *no one* would have opposed the apostle.

46. "And when it was day, **certain of the Jews** banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul (Acts 23:12)." Over forty men were thus oath bound to kill him. It was, however, neither Paul's time to die nor was this his way to go. As always, the Lord was in the matter; Paul was delivered because his nephew providentially heard of the plot (see C., #47, below).

48. A **certain** orator named Tertullus, informed the governor against Paul: "And after five days Ananias the high priest descended with the elders, and with a **certain orator named Tertullus**, who informed the governor against Paul (Acts 24:1)." Tertullus was in effect the prosecuting attorney against Paul, who spoke in his own defense. In the outcome, this entire episode only proved the more that Paul was guided in his defense by the wisdom of God.

49. **Certain** Jews from Asia, who found Paul purified in the temple (Acts 24:18), were instrumental in Paul's final arrest, deportation, and, finally, his death in Rome. In his defense, Paul said, "Whereupon **certain Jews from Asia** found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult (Acts 24:18)."

B. Certain friends of Paul and of the church:

42. "And **certain of the chief of Asia**, which were his [Paul's] friends, sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theatre (Acts 19:31)." This happened during the riot in Ephesus caused by Demetrius and his idol-makers (see A., 41, above). Paul *would* have gone into the theatre where the protest was raging, but again, by the intervention of Paul's friends, God providentially kept him from what from the human standpoint would appear to have led to his death at the hands of the mob.

43. A **certain young man named Eutychus**: "And there sat in a window a **certain young man named Eutychus**, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead (Acts 20:9)." Paul would not have fit into the 20- or 30-minute sermon format of our day. He had returned to Troas (verse 6), where he preached until midnight, as he was to leave the next day. When the sleepy young man fell out of the third-story window, he was killed by the fall. Paul, blessed to use another of the special gifts of an apostle, raised him from the dead (verses 10-12). Such miracles in the apostolic era served two major purposes (besides comforting the ones the apostles healed and their families and friends): The miracles vindicated their apostleship and bore witness that what they preached was true.

44. A **certain prophet, named Agabus**: "And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a **certain prophet, named Agabus** (Acts 21:10)." This prophet foretold of Paul's forthcoming

arrest and imprisonment, a necessary step in Paul's experience. Paul replied, "What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." This beautiful commitment would have had no occasion to be made had it not been for the Lord's sending this *certain* prophet. Likewise, the reply of the brethren, when they saw that Paul "would not be persuaded," said, "The will of the Lord be done (verse 14)." How can anyone doubt that it was the Lord's will for Paul to be arrested and sent to Rome, exactly as prophesied?

45. **Certain of the disciples of Caesarea:** "There went with us also **certain of the disciples of Caesarea**, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge (Acts 21:16)." This old disciple was "given to hospitality." Providentially, Paul and all of the Lord's people are provided for by God's grace. The first seven letters of the words *providence* and *providentially* spell *provide*. Remember, it is the Lord who provides for His own, often through the intermediary of His own people.

52. Paul himself was referred to as a *certain* man; "And when they had been there many days, Festus declared Paul's cause unto the king, saying, There is **a certain man** left in bonds by Felix (Acts 25:14)." The life and experiences of Paul were certain, as, of all the people in the history of the world, Paul was the one God chose to be His apostle to the Gentiles. All he experienced, including his arrest and execution, were arranged in the purpose and predestination of God. Festus could not have been more right than when he referred to Paul as a **certain** man whom Felix had left in bonds.

C. A Certain Thing to Tell

there was also this **certain thing** Paul had his nephew tell to the chief captain who was in charge of him as prisoner of the Roman Empire:

47. "Then Paul called one of the centurions unto him, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain: for he hath **a certain thing** to tell him (Acts 23:17)."

The young man was Paul's nephew, who had providentially heard of the oath the men had taken to kill Paul (A., #46, above). The young man told Paul, who had him taken to the chief captain of the Roman

soldiers. This was amazing in itself when you consider that this is a prisoner directing the affairs of the Roman army from his place of imprisonment! All this chain of events constituted an amazing series of providences of God. Luke tells it this way: Paul's nephew told the Roman commander,

"The Jews have agreed to desire thee that thou wouldest bring down Paul to morrow into the council, as though they would inquire somewhat of him more perfectly. But do not thou yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him: and now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee."

So the chief captain then let the young man depart, and charged him, "See thou tell no man that thou hast showed these things to me."

And he called unto him two centurions, saying, "Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Caesarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night; And provide them beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring him safe unto Felix the governor." And he wrote a letter after this manner: "Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix sendeth greeting. This man was taken of the Jews, and should [i.e., would] have been killed of them: then came I with an army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman. And when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their council: whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds. And when it was told me how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also to say before thee what they had against him. Farewell."

Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought him by night to Antipatris. On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle: Who, when they came to Caesarea, and

delivered the epistle to the governor, presented Paul also before him.

Not to lose sight of our subject, we would ask: Was there anything *uncertain* about what the young man had to say?

An interesting but unanswered question coming out of this incident is, when they could not kill Paul, did the forty assassins starve themselves to death according to the vow they took? Or, on the other hand, did they finally give up and begin eating and drinking again?

D. Certain days involved (50-51)

50. “And after **certain** days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ (Acts 24:24).”

51. “And after **certain** days king Agrippa and Bernice came unto Caesarea to salute Festus (Acts 25:13).”

E. Certain Questions

There were certain questions (53) that the Jews raised about the resurrection of Jesus (Acts 25:19); 53. “But [they] had **certain** questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive (Acts 25:19).”

Although the Romans considered these questions to be a matter of Jewish superstition, the questions were foundational to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, because without the resurrection of Christ there is no gospel.

F. NO Certain Thing

Also of interest, it is worthy of note that Felix, the governor, had NO certain thing to write about, but he wrote anyway:

54. Felix wrote to his superior about Paul, “Of whom **I have no certain thing** to write unto my lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and specially before thee, O king Agrippa, that, after examination had, I might have somewhat to write (Acts 25:26).” Everything in the Lord’s foreordained providence is certain and sure, but here is a powerful, earthly Roman ruler who, in his own estimation and by his own words, has no *certain* thing to write about, and yet he scribbled on.

G. Certain prisoners accompanied them

55. “And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and **certain other prisoners** unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus’ band (Acts 27:1).” There had to be other prisoners; Julius the centurion would not have made a trip to Rome to take Paul only. Each of these prisoners had to have done something to be made a prisoner for, and each one had to be arrested and brought together for this trip. Of the individual prisoners little or nothing is known. Yet, collectively, in the gathering together of a shipload of prisoners from all around that part of the Roman Empire, we have another subtle example of the complex providences God uses to accomplish His purpose. To men it might appear that this was merely a haphazard catch-as-catch-can roundup of criminals; to the Lord, and to those to whom He reveals these things, it was **certain** other prisoners who composed this boatload of captives.

H. Two Certain Islands and a Certain Creek

56. “And running under a **certain island** which is called Clauda, we had much work to come by the boat (Acts 27:16).”

57. “Howbeit we must be cast upon a **certain island** (Acts 27:26).” This second island was Melita, now known as Malta.

58. “And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they discovered a **certain creek** with a shore, into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship (Acts 27:39).”

Luke’s account is too lengthy to reproduce here, nor is it necessary to do so. His description of the trip and the shipwreck, given in Acts 27 and 28, is flawless. The crew’s navigation around the islands is technical and exact enough that archaeologists have found not only the exact spot where the boat was anchored during the storm the night before it was destroyed, but the anchors themselves have been found and recovered!

Three Bible dictionaries (Davis, 1954; Harper’s, 1952; and Smith’s, 1948) all mistakenly identify the location of the shipwreck at St. Paul’s Bay on the northeast side of the island of Malta (the modern name of Melita), following the tradition of Rome, after a fifteenth-century monk identified that bay as the wreck’s location. Current archaeological evidence, however, is that what is now named the Bay of St.

Thomas on the southeast part of the island of Malta is where the shipwreck and the events of Acts 27 and 28 took place: (a) The bay fits the description in Acts, including the creek into which the sailors purposed to run the ship (Acts 27.39); (b) there is a reef there, called the Munxar Reef, where literally two seas meet (verse 41); (c) the water is fifteen fathoms (ninety feet) deep here (verse 28).

Based on these observations, marine archaeologists have identified three anchors found there, dating back to the first century as the type of anchors Paul's boat would have used. Several years ago, these anchors were found and recovered by local divers and are now on display in the Maritime Museum on Malta. (The boys who found them had the fourth anchor melted down for diving weights.)

In May of 2003, Robert Cornuke published a book entitled, *The Lost Shipwreck of Paul*, documenting the entire account. Of this book, the national book distributor, Booksamillion, says: "This book is best described as the documented specific find of all four, thirteen foot Alexandrian Roman Anchors discussed in Acts chapter 27, verse 29 of the Holy Bible." The book's publisher (Global Publishing) says it is the "documented specific find of all four, thirteen foot Alexandrian Roman Anchors discussed in Acts chapter twenty seven verse twenty nine of the Holy Bible. The President of Malta, the Head of the Maltese Military, a former United States Ambassador to Malta, and many others have been involved with this project..."

I have gone into some extra detail on these *certain* islands, the *certain* creek, and the archaeological verification of the facts recorded in Acts 27 because **the Bible says what it means and means what it says, literally**. We know that no unbeliever and no skeptic will ever "become a believer" on the basis of such marvelous finds, but for the Lord's elect such finds are sometimes blessed of the Lord to confirm their faith. When God says a thing is certain, one can count on it.

SUMMARY

Our opening text in the September-October issue was taken from 2 Samuel 23.5: "*Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.*" That says it all. The everlasting covenant God made with David is

ordered in all things and sure, or certain. That, of necessity, according to the text, includes all things.

How could anyone claim to believe in a God who is in sovereign control of His creation—

—if he believes there were one "loose cannon," one stray arrow, one runaway oxcart, or one foot slipping on a treacherous mountain pathway that could possibly kill one person before his or her time? Or,

—if he believes one person will ever be in the wrong place at the wrong time? Or,

—if he believes any saint will fail to be born again because someone did not preach the gospel to that saint? Or,

—if he believes one drop of ocean water will go beyond the bound God has set for the sea, or,

—if he believes one grain of the ocean's sand is out of place or could as easily be elsewhere?

If one event can be out of place or at the wrong time, why cannot two? If two, why not twenty, or two hundred, or two hundred billion trillion? Where would it end? If the wisest of philosophers could prove logically that one person or thing can be out of place in time or space, the very same logic would prove anything and everything could be out of place.

If one drop of ocean-water or one grain of sand can be out of place, then two can, two hundred can, two hundred billion trillion can, the oceans could be out of place and cover the cities and countries of the world, and all men, women, and children, and all plant and animal life can die before their time. If not, why not? The free will advocates owe us an answer to this question, seeing they hate and put far from them the only alternative, which is the doctrine of God's absolute control of all things and events.

Some form of the words *certain*, *certainly*, and *certainly* occurs 234 times in the KJV Bible. From Genesis 18.10, "And he said, I will **certainly** return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son" (Did the Lord return according to the time of life? Did Sarah have a son?) to Jude 4, "For there are **certain** men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" (has this certainly happened? Have certain ungodly men crept in, etc.?), all is ordained and carried to fulfillment by our sovereign Lord Jesus Christ.

In Acts, *certain* is used 58 times and *certainty* twice. Think of it! In the book of Acts alone we have found certain men, good and bad (as we are prone to say), inside the church and out: Ananias and Sapphira, and Ananias of Damascus; Aquila, Apollos, Cornelius, Justus, Aeneas, two lame men, Agabus the prophet, Eutychus, the men from Joppa and the men who accompanied Peter; Timothy, the disciples of Ephesus and Caesarea, the teachers of truth and the false teachers; lewd fellows, philosophers, idolatrous silversmiths, poets and sorcerers, Jews, vagabond Jews and Jews in the temple, lawyers, orators, prisoners, and assassins, brethren, particularly James, who was certain to be martyred by Herod. Any and all were certain, and any was as certain as anyone else.

There were certain women, as Tabitha, Lydia, and the Philippian damsel, Priscilla, and Timothy's mother.

There were certain places—two islands, a creek, and a riverside outside of Philippi—where Paul and others had to be at certain times on certain days. This means that in order to be there, they could not have been anywhere else in the entire world at that set and appointed time.

There were certain strange things heard, certain things told, certain questions, and a certain price for Ananias' parcel of land. All were as certain as anything and anyone else.

In the face of all this, there is man's *uncertainty*, typified in the letter of Felix, the antitype of all governmental memos, where this politician admits he has nothing to say, but he writes anyway, in distinct contrast to Luke's—nay, to God's!—certainties.

Indeed, what if God specified a certain time for a certain person to be at a certain place and do a certain thing, and then nobody came? Where and how would it all end, if not in confusion and chaos?

There is no gray-scale between certainty and uncertainty. Any event is one or the other; it is either certain or it is not. We would ask those who yet think this life is little more than a series of free-will coin-tosses where man gets to call the outcomes: What part of **certain** do you not understand?

Even if life *were* an endless series of "coin-tosses," **God controls the outcome of the coin-tosses**: "The lot is cast into the lap; but *the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD* (Proverbs 16.33)."

For the rest of us (that is, for those who believe God has eternally decreed and predestinated all things that

come to pass), as we are given to meditate on these precious truths, may He continue to bless us with the sweet assurance that we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

—C. C. Morris

WHY THE EMPHASIS ON THE RESURRECTION?

For over a year we have printed what may seem to have been an unusually high number of articles on the resurrection. Some may wonder why this is so.

First and foremost, nothing is more important in the gospel of Christ Jesus than the doctrine of the bodily resurrection; first that of Jesus Christ, the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Without the physical, bodily resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are yet in our sins and without hope. If He did not rise from the dead (blush at the suggestion!), His people will not rise from the dead; but since He *did* rise from the dead, then His people will also rise from the dead. They will do so physically, as He did, for He 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. That has been the grand hope and expectation of the Christian church ever since such a body has existed, in spite of an extreme minority that has from time to time risen up within the church denying the truth of the resurrected Christ and the expectation of His people to partake in the same.

There are those who say the resurrection, either of Christ or of His people, is only a "spiritual resurrection." As we shall soon show, that is a contradiction in terms and a total misrepresentation of what the word *resurrection* means.

One of the many things that distinguishes man from the lower animals is that man stands **erect** or upright. This standing upright is fundamental to the resurrection itself. From Webster, we find of the words

Insurrection: Latin, *insurgere*. See INSURGENT.

Insurgency, insurgent: Latin, *insurgere* to rise up, from *in* + *surgere*, to rise

Resurrection: Latin, *resurrectio*, from *resurgere*, *resurrectum*, to rise again, from *re* + *surgere* to rise

Surge: Latin, *surgere*, *surrectum*, to raise, rise
The roots of the words *insurrection* and *resurrection* are of Latin origin.

Both *Insurrection* and its related word *insurgency* have to do with a **rising up** or **standing up** [of the people] against civil or political authority.

The prefix *re* in *resurrection* means to do something again: redo, rework, rethink. To do something again. **Resurrection** means *to stand up again*.

Webster has a most interesting definition of the little Latin particle, *re*: “A prefix denoting 1. *back, especially back to an original or former state or position...* 2. *Again*;—used chiefly to form words denoting repetition (of the action of the verb), as in *reiterate...or restoration* (to a previous state), as in *renew*.” We might say, “or as in *resurrection*.”

A *resurrection*, then, would mean going back to the original or former state or position, i.e., that of standing upright once more. Of *Again*, Webster says (to paraphrase): “used chiefly to form words denoting *repetition* (of the action of the verb [in this case, *standing again*—Editor]), as in *resurrect* (to a previous state of standing upright again).”

Whatever the reader thinks of word studies and Latin roots, all of this points to the fact that the **REsurrection is a standing up again**. The question remains: *What* used to be standing upright, is not now standing upright, and will stand upright again—the soul, the body, or the spirit of the deceased? The answer given in the Bible and by God’s saints in every age is, the human’s mortal body that has lain down in death shall stand up again, not in sin, shame, and weakness, but in righteousness, power, and glory, made like the glorious body of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I cannot comment on the subject more fully here, because I am saving room for a short article by Elder H. H. Lefferts. We are compelled to republish his 1941 article because another of his articles, first printed in 1920, which seems to deny the bodily resurrection, has recently resurfaced.

Briefly and to the point: a friend who styles himself a “Preterist” recently circulated two articles, both written in 1920, in support of his *preterist* position against the literal bodily resurrection. The two

articles are *Resurrection*, by Elder H. C. Ker (*Signs of the Times*, August 1, 1920), and *The Resurrection, The Better Resurrection and the First Resurrection*, by Elder H. H. Lefferts (Editorial in the *Signs of the Times*, August 15, 1920), which begins, “Desiring to follow brother Ker on the subject of the resurrection, that our readers may see and know that we stand together, have decided to republish the following article, which was first published October 1st, 1915.”

Both of these articles—Ker’s and Lefferts’—are in the book, *The Resurrection of the Dead*, published in June, 1943, by Elder R. Lester Dodson, a former editor of *The Signs of the Times*. He compiled this book partly from articles that had been previously printed in *The Old Faith Contender*, *The Signs of the Times*, and *Zion’s Landmark*, and partly from the personal correspondence, books, pamphlets, and other writings of the elders he reprints in his book.

If I understand him correctly, Elder Dodson did not believe in the literal, physical resurrection of the human body. The outline of his book is as follows: **Part I**, a Foreword by Elder Dodson himself, followed by **Section A**, his view of the resurrection as being a “spiritual” or non-literal resurrection; and **Section B**, the writings of elders who agree with Elder Dodson’s view. Finally, there is **Part II**, the writings of elders who advocate a literal bodily resurrection and do not agree with Elder Dodson’s view. (I am unspeakably happy to announce that Elder J. C. Sikes, founding pastor of Saints Rest Primitive Baptist Church of Dallas, is an able representative in Part II. It is my hope to reprint his article later this year, as the Lord wills.)

Elder Dodson, then, was intellectually honest enough to admit there was a widespread disagreement on this subject among the brethren of his day and previously, and he had the integrity to print a goodly number of articles which diametrically opposed his own position.

Of the twenty-two elders represented by all these articles, only one elder has the odd distinction of being found in both Parts I and II—it is none other than Elder H. H. Lefferts.

In part I, on page 83, there is the 1920 article by Elder Lefferts that advances the notion that the resurrection is spiritual only and not physical. This is the article that, along with Elder Ker’s article, our preterist friend has begun to circulate.

In Part II, however, is another article by Elder Lefferts, printed *twenty and one-half years later*, dated February 15, 1941, in the which he plainly advocates the resurrection of the body in clear contradistinction to what he had promoted in 1915-1920. We could hope everyone would be blessed to so grow after 20 years of reading, searching, and studying the Scriptures.

We respect Elder Lefferts all the more for his having the courage to reject his earlier “spiritualizing” of this important doctrine and to publicly acknowledge what the Bible plainly teaches about the resurrection of the physical body.

Before we print the article, we need to briefly address the questions, “What is a Preterist?” And, “What is preterism?” In searching for a fair and objective answer, I found no reference to either preterism or Preterists in Hassell’s *History of the Church of God*, John Gill’s *Body of Divinity, Systematic Theology* of Elder R. V. Sarrells, Robert L. Dabney’s *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, Philip Schaff’s *History of the Christian Church* or many other reference books including Webster’s Dictionary and *Encyclopedia Britannica*. To find out what they are, in fairness, we turn to their own writings. Let them explain for us what a Preterist is and what he believes.

1. The website “One Nation Under (1) God”

(<http://www.nate4onenation.com/Preterist.htm>)

says, “...the preterist view of eschatology, believes that Christ returned exactly how and when He said He would. In the lifetime of His contemporaries.” A pseudo-dictionary-like definition is then given: “**preterist** \Pret*er*ist\, n. [Pref. preter- + -ist.] 1. One whose chief interest is in the past; one who regards the past with most pleasure or favor. 2. (Theol.) One who believes the prophecies of the Apocalypse to have been already fulfilled. —Farrar.”

Note carefully his second, theological, definition. The preterist position is that Christ has already made His second advent or second coming (at the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD), the resurrection has already taken place, we are now enjoying the new heavens and the new earth of Revelation 20.1ff, the New Jerusalem has already descended, and, generally, the entire book of Revelation and all other biblical prophecy has been fulfilled.

2. **The Preterist Archive website** (<http://www.preteristarchive.com>) quotes F. W. Farrar, author of *Early Days of Christianity*, in support of their

position that the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD was the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: “‘*the Fall of Jerusalem was, in the fullest sense, the Second Advent of the Son of Man which was primarily contemplated by the earliest voices of prophecy*’—F. W. Farrar, *Early Days of Christianity*, ii., p. 49”

3. **Prophecy Reformation Institute** (<http://www.prophecyrefi.org/>): “*Something significant is, indeed, happening. The world is not about to end. The “last days” are not here. They happened 19 centuries ago. And, there is every reason to build for a positive, optimistic, and long-term future for God’s kingdom on this earth.*”

“*This past-fulfillment view is the defining characteristic and strength of the historic preterist position.*”

“*Discover from PRI,*” they say:

- “*How this type of teaching [i.e., “the end is coming” or yet future—Ed.] has been false from the beginning!*”

- “*How all prophecy in the Bible has been completely fulfilled!*”

- “*How all promised, end-time blessings are completely available!*”

- “*How “the deception of the elect” (Mt. 24:24) has held us in bondage!*”

4. Raines Road Church of Christ, Memphis, Tennessee

(<http://www.rainesroadchurchofchrist.org/downloads.html>): *He Came In Like Manner, A Study of Acts 1:11*, by William Bell.

“The purpose of this document is to honor the very words of Christ while also showing the inconsistency and contradictions in the literalistic, futuristic/ammillennial [*sic*] view of this text. Acts 1:9-11 fits perfectly within the A.D. 70 framework for Christ’s return...”

“*The Destruction of Jerusalem, A Local Event or of Universal/Eternal Consequence?* by: William Bell.

“The second and ‘final’ return of Christ, known as the Parousia, occurred in A.D. 70. This event is historically known as the destruction of Jerusalem. Jesus promised that he would return before some who then lived and stood in his very presence died.”

Every Eye Saw Him (A Study of Revelation 1:7) by: William Bell. “Many often ask,” the owners of this web site say, “‘*When Christ return [sic] in A.D. 70, did “every eye” see Him?*’ The reason for this question is the problem some have with interpreting the second coming of Christ as a past versus future event.” (Remember, these are the Preterists’ view, not mine.)

5. All Things Fulfilled (<http://www.allthingsfulfilled.com/articles.html>): *“Would you be shocked to realize that Christ’s second coming has already happened? Read Matthew 16:27, 28 and learn where Jesus said he would come in the glory of His father with the Holy angels before some who stood with him died!”*

There you have a sampling of what *preterists* believe and advocate. Anyone who has a computer with Internet access can check these and other Preterist web sites until their heart is content. Preterists are prolific writers. They provide mountains of material about what they believe, which is, essentially that all Bible prophecy is already fulfilled and was fulfilled in the apostolic era. This includes the second coming or return of Christ (also called His *second advent* or the *parousia*), the end of the world, the judgment, the ushering in of the eternal state, the new heavens and the new earth—all, they say, is right here and now. Haven’t you noticed that there are now no more tears, there is no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither any more pain, and there is no more curse: “for the former things are passed away”?

It is not my intention to present here either a complete exposition of what Preterists believe or a rebuttal of their views. What got me started on this, remember, was an article written by Elder Lefferts presented in such a way that we might wrongly conclude he died not believing in a bodily resurrection. That is unfair to him, I believe, because the Preterist who “resurrected” the 1920 article said nothing to indicate that in later years Elder Lefferts was brought to believe in a literal resurrection of this mortal body. We herewith reprint his 1941 article in an effort to rectify our Preterist friend’s deficiency in this area. Our readers may judge for themselves from the following article whether or not Elder Lefferts believed in a literal, bodily resurrection:

THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST IN US

(This article was printed in *Zion’s Landmark*
February 15, 1941)

Elder E. L. Cobb, Dear Brother in the Gospel:

The Lord enabling me, I shall reply to your recent letter in which you ask my views on the 11th verse of the 8th chapter of Romans. This passage of the inspired

Word declares that if the same Spirit which raised Christ from the dead dwells in us who believe, that this same Spirit shall raise our mortal bodies in the future resurrection to take place when the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven, as is promised in the first epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians, chapter four, verses 16 and 17.

According to our Lord’s words in John, chapter 5, verse 29, there are to be two resurrections. The one unto the resurrection of life, the other unto the resurrection of damnation. The first of these shall be that of the redeemed unto glory, the second shall be that of the finally impenitent, reprobate wicked, unto eternal punishment. Paul, by inspiration, in Romans 8:11 announces to the Lord’s people that the assurance that they are to be raised in the first resurrection which shall be unto life and immortality, is that the Spirit which raised up Christ from the dead already dwells in the elect here in this present life which we now live in this present evil world.

This indwelling Spirit is proof, or pledge, that the mortal bodies of the saints shall in due time be quickened and changed into conformity with the glorious body of Christ which He himself now wears in Heaven. Our body is now mortal, but then it shall be immortal; now it is corruptible, then it shall be incorruptible. The word “mortal” means being in subjection to death; not simply being liable to die, but definitely subject to death; and when dead, being in subjection to death. Unless we who are now living on the earth are among those to be alive and remaining on the earth when our Lord comes, death shall one day take these bodies of ours. However, if the Lord is to come during our lifetime, we shall not die, but shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump. Should our Lord tarry, then we shall die as have the past generations of all who have truly believed in God and in His Son Jesus Christ. **Yet death shall not be able to forever enchain in the grave these bodies of ours. They are a part of the purchased possession whose redemption is promised in Ephesians 1:14. It is for this adoption, which is the redemption or resurrection of the body, we wait and hope. These bodies now mortal, shall be quickened.** The Holy Spirit in the Word tells us by what means it is to be accomplished. The same Spirit which raised Christ from among the dead when He arose, is the same Spirit by which the children of God

are brought to believe savingly in Christ. Ephesians first chapter, 19th and 20th verses, so declare. And this same Spirit which indwells the believing child of God is the abiding earnest, or pledge, that our mortal bodies SHALL also be quickened by means of this very Spirit, when the time set by God to do so, shall arrive.

The word "SHALL" is important. The scripture doesn't declare that this Spirit "IS" quickening our mortal bodies, but that it "SHALL" do so. It is yet future, it is not something experienced by us while in this present earthly life. The notion that there is such a thing as the quickening of the mortal body now in our present experience, is not in accord with scripture teaching. The theory that this quickening of the mortal body is in our present experience of God's grace, is not in accord with Paul's experience as set forth by him in Romans 7th chapter. In the Spirit's work of regeneration, the sinner comes into possession of a divine nature imparted to him and planted within him. The old human nature is not rooted up and cast out, neither is it quickened or a whit changed from what it was prior to regeneration. The "body" remains the same: "dead because of sin." Romans 8:10. So long as the child of God stays here in this world, he carries with him this "dead body." The stench of it intrudes into all his best endeavors, its impurities stain his prayers and meditations and spoils his efforts to obedience. There is no quickening of the body this side of the "first resurrection." **The essence of that for which we now hope, is the coming of the Lord from heaven to change our vile bodies and fashion them like unto the body of His own glory.** "Looking for that Blessed Hope, the appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Then, and not until then, we shall awake in Christ's likeness and be satisfied forever. what evidence have you or I, or has any one, that we are to have a place and part in the "first resurrection"? That is, the future coming forth of the complete and whole redeemed church in body and in soul and in spirit from among the dead? The evidence we have is this indwelling of the Holy Spirit in our mortal bodies now. Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost. I Cor. 6:19. Likewise, it is declared that our bodies are the members of Christ. Being the members of Christ, can they be lost forever in death? To say so would be to say that part of Christ can remain forever dead. It cannot be. Death shall be swallowed up in victory, the grave itself shall be led captive for

having so long held captive the bodies of the saints. When the Lord Himself shall be revealed from heaven bringing with Him the spirits of all them that sleep in Him, to unite them to their resurrection bodies, then the "creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God." This is the divine fulfillment of our Salvation in Christ for which we wait in hope. This present earth and heavens in which we are now is being reserved unto fire and unto the day of judgment of ungodly men, in which the elements being on fire shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth and all the works therein shall be burned up. Is not this the lake of the fire of the second death which is to engulf in eternal torment all of the finally impenitent, reprobate wicked? This "second death" shall have nothing to do with those having part in the "first resurrection" which is the coming forth from among the dead of all the elect of God in Christ.

We who hope in Christ and who look for His appearing in glory to bring us into that glory with Himself, and so to be with Him and like Him, are not looking for the "fire" nor into the "fire," but we look for the new heavens and the new earth in which shall dwell righteousness. Even now, we are citizens of that new creation by reason of that blessed Holy Spirit which now abides in the children of God. Though we are in the world, we are not of it.

This is a grand theme and I glory in it. I wish I had the ability to set it forth in some measure of the beauty and grandeur in which I have been made to believe in it. I have but scanned it, just hinted at it. I have a blessed Hope, unworthy though I am in myself, that I shall one day see Jesus face to face and be like Him. To be like Him will necessitate our having a body like His. This He has promised us. That body which we shall then wear, which body is to be like His, shall be this present mortal body quickened, changed, made immortal and incorruptible. This the scriptures teach, and thus am I blessed to believe it.

Yours in the best of bonds,

—H. H. Lefferts
Leesburg, Va.

(NOTE: Reparagraphing and **bold emphases** in the above article have been supplied. All wording, punctuation, words in captial letters, and spelling are exactly as published by Elder Dodson.—*Editor*)

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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.