

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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PRAYER

Prayer Defined

According to the Greek Dictionary in Strong's Concordance, prayer means to call upon, call to, beg, supplicate, worship, wish, or will. Perhaps the best definition may be to communicate to God our needs, feelings, and desires. The poets of old defined this very well:

*Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Unuttered or expressed;
The motion of a hidden fire,
That trembles in the breast.
(Primitive Hymns #453)*

True, genuine, spiritual prayer is a spontaneous reaction to the daily situations of life. Jehovah is the God of purpose. He has eternally purposed that all things come to pass out of absolute necessity. What God has purposed from eternity, he works in time through his Providence. All things that occur in the lives of his creatures are brought to pass to fulfill the purpose of an omnipotent, immutable, sovereign God. Therefore, the prayers of God's elect are in response to the circumstances of life.

There is such a thing as formal prayer, a prayer that is often made in a particular situation that is not prompted by the Spirit. All true prayer is a result of outward providences, and inward leadings of the Spirit of God. “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for

as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered (Romans 8.26).”

The Spirit does not actually pray for the children of God; but takes our needs and desires, which we find difficult or impossible to express, and brings them before Him who sits upon the throne of grace. The groanings are ours, not the Spirit's, and he intercedes with us to communicate our wishes to God. If it were not so, our weakness would make it impossible for frail humanity to communicate with the Almighty. Once again we see the mercies of our Lord in doing for us something which otherwise would be impossible for us.

“And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because [*that*] he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God (Romans 8.27).” Genuine, sincere prayer by the saints is always made according to the revealed will of God. Prayer is not for the benefit of God, but for the good of his children. God conforms or molds the saints to his will by prayer; he uses prayer to reconcile the elect to his will for them.

Prayer that is only made outwardly, or formal prayer, may be best illustrated in church services. Often a brother is called upon to make some prayer in the meeting; but inwardly he may have no desire to express; no spiritual needs to bring before the Lord at that time. Prayer is often made in these situations to the honor of God, and for the comfort of those present. This does not always mean that no sincere prayer is offered; the child of grace can only hope that they are

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making genuine, heartfelt prayer. The comfort we can take in this situation is, that even these actions are ordained of God.

It should be clear that prayer is a spiritual act and not natural. It is the saints heartfelt attempt at communicating with their heavenly Father. Brought forth from the very core of their being by the grace of God, and the experiences of life. Thus, prayer begins and ends with the Lord for the benefit of the children of grace.

Origin of Prayer

As mentioned in the previous portion of this article, prayer has its beginnings in the eternal counsel of Jehovah. Jesus told his disciples not to pray like the hypocrites who think that if they cry long and loud enough God will hear; but that "...your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him...(Matthew 6.8)." The eternal God who has ordained all things from eternity certainly must have known all the needs of his saints from eternity. God never learns; he has a perfect knowledge of every event that shall ever occur. Jehovah has ordained every event that shall take place.

The prayers of the children of God take place in time; these prayers are ordered of the Lord because they are part of his purpose. "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)." Praying is a

good work of the Lord that he has ordained for his children to perform. The Bible affirms that God gives attention to the prayers of the righteous. "The Lord is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous (Proverbs 15.29)." Who are the righteous? Those to whom God imputes the righteousness of Christ; those chosen in Christ from before the foundation of the world; all that the Father has given him in the covenant of grace.

So we should understand that the first cause of genuine, Christian prayer is the eternal will of God. Secondary, or providential causes, may be said to be the immediate cause of prayer. Whether the Lord has blessed in some marvelous way, and he constantly does, or he has sent affliction into our lives in some way; these are designed by a kind and loving God to elicit responses in the children of grace.

Manasseh is a prime example of this principle. In the 33rd chapter of 2 Chronicles the account is given of King Manasseh. It describes what an evil ruler he was in Judah. The circumstances of his life brought him to his knees before the Lord. "And when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his Fathers (2 Chronicles 33.12)." We can see here that Jehovah has a definite plan for the lives of his children; prayer is a part of that plan.

Attitude in Prayer

"For there is not a word in my tongue, but, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether (Psalm 139.4)." If the Lord knows all about us, then why do we pray? Very simply we cannot help it. God has ordained that his children should call upon him from the heights of their joys, and from the depths of their afflictions. We often call to him out of concern for others. This is not legalism, when done from a sincere heart. "...Lord teach us to pray... (Luke 11.1)." Notice that Jesus did not scold his disciples and tell them they need not be concerned about prayer, or that the Spirit would lead them in prayer, but he patiently teaches them the way in which they should address their desires to their heavenly Father.

Christ gave his followers a model prayer or an example of how to pray:

"After this manner therefore pray ye:
Our Father which art in heaven,

Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done in earth,
as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil:
For thine is the kingdom, and the power,
and the glory, forever, Amen."
(Matthew 6.9-13)

The elect are to address God as their heavenly Father. This indicates to the saints, who are possessed of the Spirit of Adoption, that they truly are the children of Jehovah. This encourages a childlike attitude in communicating with the Lord.

Likewise, the elect are to remember that Jehovah is the God of Holiness and should be viewed as such. The revealed will of God is the expression of his Holiness to man.

The will of God should be the chief focus of thought for the saints. Knowing that the eternal decrees of Jehovah shall mostly surely come to pass without fail; the Christian should be reminded that the revealed will of God is the only rule of faith and practice for the saints.

The children of the kingdom should frequently be in prayer for the Kingdom of God. The kingdom does not exist in outward display, but within the heart of the children of grace. The manifestation of the rule and reign of grace should be our prayer.

The saints of God have nothing that they have not received from his gracious and merciful hand. We should ever be mindful to express our gratitude to the Thrice-Holy-God for all that he provides for us in natural things.

Surely as the God of All Grace has forgiven us our sins for the sake of Christ, we should be forgiving toward those who offend us. To hold and nurse a grudge can be harmful to others as anger, pain, and resentment build; this not only does harm to others, but is extremely hurtful to the Christian.

The children of God should realize that their steps are ordered of the Lord; he is the one who leads and guides all for the good of his little ones. Dependence upon him for every path we take, and every situation

we enter is the only attitude the believer should ever have.

All power in heaven and earth are his. The elect should always keep this in mind. None can defeat the purposes of God, or overthrow his ways. To be reminded of this is the greatest comfort the saints can possess.

In case there is one who thinks that I am altogether too legalistic in my views; I remind you that this is the revealed will of God to his Church. Experience teaches great lessons, but the guide for the subjects of grace is the Holy Scriptures. In them we see are weakness and depravity revealed. The elect measure themselves against the Standard of Holiness and find that they can never rise to the level of God's righteousness. While we live in the flesh, we can never please God; but through grace we persevere. Finding ourselves totally without strength or perfections, we are brought to rely more and more upon Christ for all our supplies. This should be the attitude the children of God have when they approach the throne of grace.

Objects of Prayer

The Lord Jesus Christ instructed his followers to make a practice of prayer. "And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint (Luke 18.1)." This agrees perfectly with what the Apostle Paul would later say to the Church at Thessalonica. "Pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5.17)." This does not mean that the saints should go about with a prayer on their lips constantly. The children of God should make a conscious attempt to communicate with the Father frequently. When the elect remember their blessings and afflictions; they will surely recall from where they come.

Knowing that every good and perfect gift comes down from the never changing God (James 1.17); the saints should ever be grateful. "In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you (1 Thessalonians 5.18)." How often we neglect the giving of thanks to our heavenly Father for every gift that we receive at his hand.

The children of grace should always be mindful of each other, as they sojourn in this world. "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and

supplication for all saints (Ephesians 6.18)." As we certainly hope that others are praying for us; we should remember to pray for others (James 5.16).

Contrary to the views of some, prayer should be made for all types of men. "I exhort therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men (1 Timothy 2.1)."

It should be understood that we are not praying for the salvation of these people; prayer is made for the benefit of the people in general and especially for the children of God. "For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quite and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty (1 Timothy 2.2)." As Americans we should ever pray for those that God has placed in positions of government and authority. "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour (1 Timothy 2.3)."

James tells the saints that prayer is to be made for the sick (James 5.14-15), for one another (James 5.16), and for things natural. "...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much...(James 5.16)." This simply means that sincere, genuine prayer made by the elect is very effective. I recall reading once an inquiry made by someone to Elder Sylvester Hassell. The question was simple; was it proper to pray for rain? Elder Hassell's response was, "Of course, even as Elijah did."

Perseverance in Prayer

Of all people, the children of God should never be timid or shy in prayer. Christ teaches that the saints should always pray. They have a heavenly Father who is compassionate, and merciful to their needs. He has provided for every contingency (from our point of view sometimes) that shall ever occur. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you (Matthew 7.7)." Not if the saints pray, but when they pray they shall receive the will of their Father for them. "For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened (Matthew 7.8)."

In the parable of the unjust judge (Luke 18.1-8), the Lord teaches his disciples to continue in prayer. They are the subjects of the God of the Universe. Though the answer of their prayers may not come quickly, or when they might wish; Jehovah will

answer their cries in his own good time and in the way it pleases him. “And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them (Luke 18.7)?” Jesus affirms that God will indeed.

“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him (Matthew 7.11)?” The lesson is that the God of heaven and earth is able to supply all the needs of his people. The elect have a great High Priest and Mediator who intercedes with his blood and finished work on their behalf. The Holy Spirit interprets our weak and finite thoughts and desires to the other members of the God-head. The Three-In-One God works on behalf of the children of grace to bless them according to his riches in heaven, and his sovereign will.

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 5.16).” Though the little trembling child of grace often knows not for what to pray; though cast down and pressed by the cares of life, he may rest in assurance that he has a kind and gracious heavenly Father who knows his every care. A knowledge of his sinful condition before the Lord; his worries over his estate; his desire to communicate with his God are all evidences of his state of grace. Approach ye poor afflicted sinners, for the source of your help can only be found at a throne of grace.

*My trials and sorrows, my conflicts and cares,
The spirit of prayer and the answer of prayers,
The steps that I tread, and the station I fill,
My Father determined and wrote in his will.*

(Beebe's Collection #1296)

May these remarks be blessed by the God of All Grace to the need of his chosen ones. Wherever they are, and whatever condition they may be in; the Lord knoweth them that are his.

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IS JESUS GOD?

PART I

Brother Morris,

There's a group of people down here who says God and Jesus is one and the same person. Would you give me your answer. I would certainly appreciate it. I don't know what denomination they call themselves.

Your brother I hope,

A Reader

In the upper room, Thomas saw the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ, and, speaking for all of God's people, he exclaimed, “My Lord and my God (John 20.28).” Since then, there should never have been any doubt among the Lord's children that *Jesus is God*.

Nor did this doctrine, the deity or Godhead of the Lord Jesus Christ, start with Thomas. On the way to Mount Moriah, Abraham told his son Isaac, “My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering (Genesis 22.8).” The casual reader might think Abraham was saying, “God will provide a lamb *for* Himself,” as we might say, “Bill will provide himself a lunch,” meaning, “Bill will provide a lunch *for* himself”; but such is not the case. Jehovah would indeed provide *Himself*, literally, a lamb for a burnt offering, as Abraham said. That Abraham's statement, “God will provide Himself a **lamb**,” was not referring to **the ram** that he offered in Isaac's stead (verse 13), it is obvious, for the words **lamb** (Hebrew, *seh*) and **ram** (Hebrew, *ayil*) in Genesis 22 are entirely different. John the Baptist was speaking on the same level as was Abraham when he said, “Behold **the Lamb of God**, which taketh away the sin of the world. (John 1.29).”

ISAIAH DECLARES JESUS IS GOD

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9.6).”

That a child is born is not at all uncommon. That this born child is the Son who is given, however, is unique in the history of the race. This was no ordinary child or son. Although He was indeed the son (*i. e.*, direct descendant) of David and of Abraham (Matthew 1.1), and He was the son of Mary (Mark 6.3), and He delighted to call Himself the Son of man (Matthew 12.40, Luke 19.10), and many *supposed* He was the son of Joseph (Luke 3.23, John 6.42), He was more than any and all of these. He was confessed to be the Son of God (Matthew 14.33, 27.54, Luke 1.35), the Son of the Living God (Matthew 16.16, John 6.69), the Son of the Highest (Luke 1.32), the Son of God Most High (Luke 8.28). He was so announced and confessed by angels, apostles, demons, and by the devil himself. According to His own question to His enemies (John 10.36), He also had said so Himself and did not deny it: "Say ye of Him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, **I am the Son of God?**"

Objection and Reply

Objection: Sometimes the enemies of God will raise the argument that His being called the Son of God does not prove His deity, for John says, "*Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God...Beloved, now are we the sons of God...*(1 John 3.1f)." "He," they argue, "was only a son of God even as we are sons of God."

Reply: Such a blasphemy is scarcely worth mentioning, other than the fact that we should be aware that unbelievers will sometimes confront His people with it.

1. Matthew (1.23) says of His birth, quoting from Isaiah 7.14: "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name **Emmanuel**, which being interpreted is, **God with us.**" His virgin birth and His name that means "GOD WITH US" marks Him as unique in all of history, as separate and apart from all of God's other children who were neither virgin-born nor "God with us."

2. Further, among other things, our text in Isaiah 9.6 tells us about this Son given that His name shall be called, among other things, *The mighty God* and *The everlasting Father*. These names set Him apart from God's other children, for He alone is entitled to the

names of the Mighty God and the Everlasting Father. Did the apostle John say, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called *the mighty God* and *the everlasting Father*"?

Did John say, "Beloved, now are we *the mighty God* and *the everlasting Father*"?

3. Along with this objection is another, promulgated by the heretical modernist movement, that says, "Jesus was divine in the sense we are all divine; God created us in His image, and we all have a spark of divinity in us...."

As a result, there are religious men referred to as "divines" and Hollywood harlots are now commonly called "divas." (A "diva," from the same root as "divine," is another word for a heathen goddess.)

The word "*Divine*," as originally applied to Christ and the eternal three-one Godhead, meant (or at least implied) true deity, true Godhood, the being of God Himself. The word was watered down by the followers of the German Rationalists of the early nineteenth century to mean little more than "godlike" or "possessing divine qualities" such as love, kindness, a peaceful character, and some of the other fruits of the Spirit; hence, the Rationalists said, "Jesus was divine in the sense we are all divine." In other words, saying Christ was divine came to mean little more to the modern skeptics than saying that Jesus was a good man, like lots of other good men, and He was nothing more. These same enemies of God who said that Jesus was "divine" also said He was given to fits of anger (as when He cursed the fig tree) and other human frailties; they denied His virgin birth, insinuating Mary had been intimate with Joseph before they were married, or that Jesus was fathered by a Roman soldier. To this day these modern humanists deny His bodily resurrection and suggest that He Himself had an illicit relationship with Mary Magdalene or was married to her.

Such lies and blasphemies are perpetuated by secular religion in each generation. Currently, they are implied in the recent best-selling novel, "The Da Vinci Code." Although this book's author, Dan Brown, always says his book is a work of fiction (based on "legends"), the book (and television specials about it) continue planting and watering the seeds of doubt and unbelief among the millions of gullible people exposed to such things.

To counteract this “divinity or deity” error, those who believed—and those of us who do yet believe—that **Jesus is God manifest in the flesh** (1 Timothy 3.16) were brought to the place that they tightened up their vocabulary, insisting that Jesus was not merely *divine* in the weak sense, but that the Scriptures say He was and is *deity*, nothing less than God incarnate.

MICAH DECLARES JESUS IS GOD

“*Now gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops: he hath laid siege against us: they shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek. But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting* (Micah 5.2).” The term “everlasting” which Micah used is the Hebrew *Olam* (or *'owlam*), the name whereby God identified Himself as *The Everlasting God* in Genesis 21.33, Isaiah 40.28, and elsewhere. The name *El Olam* (or more correctly, *'owlam 'elohiym*) means far more than the idea that God is eternal, that “He always was and always will be,” which is true enough. But this name means even more: *He is the God over eternity, the God over everlasting things*. He not only “inhabits” eternity (Isaiah 57.15), walking up and down in it as you and I “inhabit” our homes; He is external to eternity, above and beyond it (the picture is, even as we are greater than the houses in which we live—see Hebrews 3.3-4), and He can do with eternity whatsoever He pleases, using it as He would any other object. (See also page 11 under Hebrews 1, point #8, below.) This is **El Olam**, the God of everlasting or eternal things, who was manifest in the flesh of Jesus of Nazareth. This is the same God who was born in Bethlehem as Micah said, to be the judge of Israel and the ruler therein: “*He shall come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting*”. The same one who is *the judge of Israel*, you will note, is the same one whom “*they shall smite...with a rod upon the cheek.*”

JOHN AND PAUL DECLARE JESUS IS GOD

There are three “first chapters” that definitively identify Jesus Christ as God: John 1, Colossians 1, and Hebrews 1.

1. JOHN DECLARES JESUS IS GOD: JOHN 1

“*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not* (John 1.1-5).”

Those who understand the exact meanings of the Greek language tell us this text is saying that before the beginning, the Word—who was with God and who was God—already was. More to the point than saying “the Word was God,” John is actually saying **GOD WAS THE WORD**, and the Word was (and is) the Lord Jesus Christ.

Exactly as Moses, Micah, and Isaiah all indicated by the name *El Olam*, so John also says that the Word, whom we know as the Lord Jesus Christ, is above and beyond time and eternity. He, Jesus the Christ, is the creator and maker of all things, for *without him was not any thing made that was made*. He created neither life nor light, for they are intrinsic in Himself. He whom we know as Jesus, however, did create all things that are and were created.

When Christ our God said in Genesis 1.3, “Let there be light,” and there was light, He did not then and there “make” or “create” light. Light shined forth from His face. 2 Corinthians 4.6 says, “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” John’s statement, “*And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not,*” and Paul’s statement in the above text are commentaries, the one on the other.

The King James Version (KJV) might here give the false impression that darkness was the source of the light (“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness....”), but such is not the case. Berry’s Interlinear Greek-English New Testament renders this verse’s word-order as: “*Because [it is] God who spoke out of darkness light to shine, who shone in our hearts, for [the] radiancy of the knowledge of the glory of God in [the] face of Jesus Christ.*”

God spoke out of darkness. He was there in the darkness; precious is this thought to those who have

known spiritual darkness! "...Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was (Exodus 20.21)." "Then spake Solomon, The LORD said that He would dwell in the thick darkness (1 Kings 8.12)." "He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness was under his feet. And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies (Psalm 18.9ff)."

In the darkness He commanded light to shine, and it did. From where did it shine? It radiated in and from the face of Jesus Christ.

2. PAUL DECLARES JESUS IS GOD: COLOSSIANS 1

"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven (Colossians 1.12-20)."

In this extended quote, Paul links Christ with the Light as John did and as Jesus Himself did when He referred to Himself by using this term, "I am the light of the world," in John 8.12 and in John 9.5, and as Paul indicated in 2 Corinthians 4.6.

Paul says it is God the Father who has done three things for His people:

1. *He has made us meet [fit] to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:* If anyone is meet (enabled or qualified) to be a partaker of the saints' inheritance in Christ the Light, God has made him so.

2. *Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness:* Darkness does not always refer to evil, but it always does in such a context as this; see Matthew 6.23; Luke 11.34f, 22.53; John 3.19ff, 8.12; Ephesians 5.11 and 6.12, and many other texts. Most particularly, spiritual darkness refers to the power of Satan: "...To open their eyes, and to turn them **from darkness** to light, and **from the power of Satan** unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance [as in Colossians 1.12] among them which are sanctified by faith that is in **me** [Christ Jesus] (Acts 26.18)." And,

3. He hath translated (lit. *transferred*) us into the kingdom of his dear Son: God has transferred His people from their state in nature into the kingdom of God.

But, as God the Father has done these three things, God the Son has done these fourteen:

1. *Redemption: we have redemption through his blood.* Redemption is not only the payment of the purchase price, which is technically the **ransom**; **redemption** is the taking of the object purchased into one's actual possession, which Christ will do when He takes His bride to Himself at His second advent.

2. *Forgiveness of sins: even the forgiveness of sins:* This is how Paul here defines what Christ's redemption has accomplished.

3. *Visibly revealed the invisible God: who is the image of the invisible God:*

4. *He is the firstborn of every creature:* Not that He is the first thing God created, as various cults assert. This phrase says He has the right to be Prophet, Priest, and King over all of His creation; and this is because

5. *He created all things that were created: by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him:* All created things, as John 1.3 says, were made not only by Himself, but He also created them *for Him*[self].

All created things were created primarily by His will and for His pleasure. The elders in heaven around His throne so state it: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created (Revelation 4.11)." The word *pleasure* in this text carries with it the thought of determination,

decree, and choice; in the KJV it is elsewhere given as *desire* and *will*.

6. *He is before all things*, as John 1.1 indicates. In eternity before there was any created being, God the Word, who was to be manifest in the fleshly body of Jesus, was there; and,

7. *By Him all things consist*: He holds all things together in the creation as a whole and as part of whatever system or systems they are in, whether a thing is considered as an atom, part of a cell, a part of a galaxy, or a part of the universe—the consistent order of all things is maintained by Him; and,

8. *He is the head of the body, the church*: As the human body is dead and useless when beheaded, so the life and animating force of the church, His body, is Christ. As the brain, center for knowledge and wisdom, is in the head, so the true wisdom of the church is in Christ, her head (1 Corinthians 1.30, 2.16; Philippians 2.5);

9. *Who is the beginning*: That is, He is the First Cause of all causes and effects, so that nothing is and nothing happens without His will's involvement;

10. *He is the firstborn from the dead*: To be brief, see point 4 above, as to the firstborn's authority. In that He is the firstborn from the dead signifies He has all authority over death and what death holds captive (Revelation 20.13: "...and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them..."), as well as over things living: "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. (Revelation 1.18)"; "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life...(Romans 8.38)." All this emphasizes that He is the sovereign ruler over the resurrection in all its features.

11. *that in all things he might have the preeminence*: Of His preeminence we have more to say under Philippians 2, below.

12. *For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell*: Earlier, in verse 9 of Colossians 1, Paul had said, "For in him dwelleth **all the fulness of the Godhead bodily**." By *Godhead* Paul is referring to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: As John said, "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one (1 John 5.7)." We have seen from this text and from John 1 that one of the names of the Lord Jesus Christ is the Word of God. To verify this

from a third text we cite Revelation 19.13, where He is seen returning to Armageddon: "And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called **The Word of God**." Jesus was and is God, verily God, not one-third of God, as though God could be divided; this is not what we understand by "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit"; but He is God Himself, complete, manifested in the flesh. When Paul said that "in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily," we understand him to mean that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit fully and completely occupied the body of the man Jesus Christ, so that He could truthfully say, "**I and my Father are one** (John 10.30)." He could rightly say to Thomas, "...**he that hath seen me hath seen the Father**; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father (John 14.9)?" *And*,

13. *having made peace through the blood of His cross*, the peace being primarily peace between God and those who were His enemies: "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 (Romans 5.10)." "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his (Romans 8.7ff)." "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ (Ephesians 2.13)."

14. *By Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven*: By the finished work of Christ, God is perfectly reconciled with the sum totality of the creation and its course. This necessarily includes the entire history of the introduction of sin into the world, and its resultant misery and death by sin (Romans 5.12), because Jesus faithfully bore the sins of His people in His body on the cross. On that tree He exhausted God's wrath against sin (Romans 1.18). In His death, He conquered Satan by bruising the serpent's head while the serpent busied himself with bruising Christ's heel. Thereby Christ removed the reason for the curse on the ground for man's sake (Genesis 3.17). The fall of man was something God could have easily prevented, had He desired to have

it so; but the fall was a necessary part of His greater will and purpose that He might the more show forth His love, grace, mercy, and glory toward the vessels of mercy which He had afore prepared unto glory, and that He might demonstrate His holiness, longsuffering, righteousness, and His hatred for, and His wrath and anger toward, all sin, ungodliness, and unrighteousness.

When He had finished the work the Father gave Him to do (John 17.4), He went to the cross to ransom and to redeem all of that which belongs to Him. He announced on the cross, "It is finished!"

It remains for Him to *manifestly apply* what He wrought in His finished work. This He will do at His second coming by taking His bride to Himself, removing the curse from the earth, and restoring all things to the perfection enjoyed by all creation before the fall (Acts 3.21). This is exactly what is spoken of in Matthew 19.28 as "the regeneration" or, literally, the *Genesis again*, or *re-Genesis*. Few realize that **Genesis** is a Greek word, not Hebrew; fewer still realize the link between the words *GENesis* and *reGENeration*.

The Greek word for "regeneration" in the KJV Bible is *paliggenesia*, a compound of *palin* (anew, once more, back), and *genesis* (generation). At that time He will restore Eden's original perfection to all creation, on earth as it is in heaven, in harmony with God's eternal will, His holiness, righteousness, and justice. Nothing short of this is required by this wondrous phrase, "*By Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.*"

3. HEBREWS 1

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they (Hebrews 1.1-4)."

That Jesus is both God and man is nowhere more evident than in this passage.

1. *"God...hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son:* God spoke to the fathers by the prophets in many times and ways. See the Old Testament for the details. The same God of the Old Testament hath spoken unto us by His Son, not as He spoke to the Old Testament patriarchs and Israelites by the prophets, but when Jesus spoke, it was God speaking. Remember: Jesus Christ is God's Word (John 1.1), and it is His Word who speaks to His people.

2. *Whom he hath appointed heir of all things:* As God, verily God, He could not be *appointed* to anything, as He is the one who has done all the appointing (Job 23.13ff, etc.). This, then, is a reference to His subjection to the Father's appointing Him to His office as the mediator between God and His people, as **the man** Christ Jesus: "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2.5)." Do not overlook the fact that He is the legitimate heir of ALL THINGS *by appointment* of God the Father.

3. *By whom also he made the worlds* (Greek, *aion*, age): This refers to His essential deity as Elohim the Creator of Genesis 1. He is presented first as being appointed as a man, which is immediately counteracted, as it were (lest for an instant anyone might think the writer is saying that the man Christ Jesus is in any way inferior to God), by the declaration that He is the Creator God.

4. *Who being the brightness of his glory:* This refers to the eternal light radiating from His glorious self as discussed in 2 Corinthians 4, John 1, and elsewhere; *and*

5. *The express image of his person:* Again, this is another reference to His humanity; an "expressed [pressed-out] image" refers either to an image pressed in clay, or to a coin pressed out in a mint, or to some similar object. Here the writer of Hebrews is saying the image of the invisible God was stamped or impressed in the visible fleshly body of Jesus as an image pressed into a clay tablet, so that we have (according to Strong's dictionary) figuratively, "an exact copy" of God. The writer of Hebrews is here verifying that Christ's statement, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," is not a stylistic, spiritual exaggeration; it is the literal truth. The commandment, "Thou shalt not make unto thee *any graven image*, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or

that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth...," is all the more wonderful when we are told that **the only God-approved image of Himself is the Lord Jesus Christ!** *And,*

6. *Upholding all things by the word of his power:* This connects with Paul's "*By Him all things consist.*" Not only is the Lord Jesus Christ the Creator of all things, but He continues upholding or sustaining all things in their ongoing existence by His omnipotence, His omniscience, and His omnipresence.

7. *When he had by himself purged our sins:* Truly the removal of the sins of God's elect is a work that could only be done by God Himself. He needed no help whatsoever to satisfy the holy and righteous demands of God and to remove all the sins of all the countless millions of His people successfully and completely. This He did, simply stated, "By Himself." "Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people (Psalm 89.19)."

8. *He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high:* This indicates both (a) a finished work (something to which the Hebrew priesthood could never attain) and (b) His right to the throne of the Majesty on high. This "on high" is *lofty* in place or in character (Strong). "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones (Isaiah 57.15)." See also the comments about God's "inhabiting eternity" under Micah, above.

9. *Being made so much better than the angels:* This again is a reference to His humanity, because as deity He could not be "made" anything. Being "made," He "was made in the likeness of men" (Philippians 2.7), but in being so made He was yet made much better than the angels, who are His servants, ministering spirits, as this chapter and the next (Hebrews 2) develop.

Angels again.

To be direct, *angel* is a Greek word brought directly into the English as was "baptize" and many other such words. In its simplest form, the word *angel* means one who is sent as a *messenger*, who may be

either natural or supernatural. The Sadducees among us are quick to say angels are nothing more than mere **men** bearing a message.

One of the current-day Sadducees' very few uses for the book of Revelation is to go to chapters 2 and 3 to get the phrases, "Unto *the angel* of the church of Ephesus write"; "And unto *the angel* of the church in Smyrna write"; etc. They reason, "The angel is the local pastor; you wouldn't write a letter to a spirit-being in heaven, would you?" Then these modern Sadducees go to Hebrews 13.2 and quote, "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares," which they take to mean we'd better be good to vagrants, because pan-handlers and street-people just might be somebody with a message from God. Suspecting that angels are either preachers or beggars (or both) is about all the Bible they seem to know about angels.

The fact is, men can indeed be "angels" in the sense of carrying messages for God. The Sadducee's fallacy is their overlooking the fact that this is not the only way the Scriptures use the word *angel*. There are invisible, powerful spirit-being called angels, whose creation predates that of the material universe. These real spirit-beings called angels in the Bible, can and sometimes do appear as **vagrant street people** ("...we will abide in the street all night"), as in Genesis 19, verses 1 and 5.

Observing how the word *angel* is used in its biblical context is the only way anyone blessed with an eye to behold eternal things can see that the term goes far above and beyond human messengers:

"Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him (Matthew 4.11)." (Were these angels *gospel ministers*, or were they not rather angelic beings from on high?)

"And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him (Mark 1.13)." (Were those angels *preachers*, or perhaps *street-people*? Or were they not rather angels from heaven?)

When Christ asked Peter, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels (Matthew 26.53)?" A legion was one thousand troops. He was not talking about 12,000 Old Baptist Elders, of whatever affiliation.

It was not an Old Baptist preacher who rolled the stone away from the empty tomb (Matthew 28.2-7) and caused the Roman guards to “shake and became as dead men.” It was not an “Old Baptist Elder” who came from “the church” to minister to Him in the garden of Gethsemane. This was exactly what the Scriptures say he was—**an angel from heaven**: “And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him (Luke 22.43).” There are almost 300 occurrences in the Scriptures of the word angel, and we cannot digress further to document something which the Sadducees will not believe anyway.

For the modern Sadducees to suggest that these ministering angelic spirits are nothing more than human “gospel ministers” is to miss the point entirely. Angels are mentioned ten times in Hebrews 1 and 2, and every time it is to prove that (1) angels are of an higher spiritual order than human beings are, and (2) Christ Jesus is higher than the angels. Angels, in turn, are ministering spirits who worship Him, serve Him, and minister to His elect; **but angels are not begotten sons, and they will never sit at God’s right hand.** God’s children are both begotten of God (1 Peter 1.3), and they will sit at God’s right hand (Matthew 25.34). Therefore, Hebrews 1.5 and 1.13 are proof positive that the angelic order and God’s children are of entirely different orders of creatures. Hebrews 2.16 cinches the matter: “For verily He [Christ] took not on Him the nature of angels; but He [Christ] took on Him the seed of Abraham,” that is, in His incarnation, He took on human nature as distinguished from angelic nature. If angelic nature were the same as human nature (i.e., if angels were only men on special assignment), then there would be no difference between the nature of angels and the nature of Abraham. Therefore, if all angels are only men, then it could not have been truthfully said, “He took *not* on Him the nature of angels.”

10. *As he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they:* This refers to His deity, because as *God the Son* and *the Son of God* He has inherited from His Father (for that is the general understanding of an inheritance) the excellence of the name of God Himself. This the angels do not have.

In the above ten phrases, Christ’s huMANity, as the God-man, is emphasized three times, in the points numbered 2, 5, and 9, above. Christ as God, or Deity,

is emphasized seven times, in the points numbered 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 10, above.

—C. C. Morris

(To be continued, Lord willing.)

HERESIES! ARE THEY PART OF GOD’S PLAN?

Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord’s supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not. (1 Corinthians 11:17-22)

Looking at verses seventeen and eighteen, Paul is rebuking the Corinthians. Notice that when they got together things were not for lifting up the brethren, or bearing one another’s burdens as Scripture commands us. No, things were “for the worse.” Paul says in verse 18 that he hears “that there be divisions among you....” If we go back to the very beginning of this book and look at Paul’s introduction and what he stated, you will find something very interesting with reference to these two verses. Look at chapter 1 verse 10: “*Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and [that] there be no divisions among you; but [that] ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.*” [emphasis added—T. A.]

The first thing we need to notice is that Paul is addressing the brethren here. He is addressing the *possessors* and not the *professors* of the group.

The second thing is looking at the word '*beseech*.' It means to "admonish, exhort, to beg, entreat, to strive to appease by entreaty, to console, to encourage and strengthen by consolation, to comfort." Here we have Paul admonishing, exhorting, begging, and encouraging them to "*speak the same thing, and [that] there be no divisions among*" themselves.

The third thing to notice is that Paul is stressing unity among the brethren. Unity is one of the most important aspects of gathering together as a body!

With those that have the Holy Spirit teaching them, there will be no major divisions among them, for there is only one truth! How else can we as totally depraved men that are selfish, self centered, and not to mention sinful ever speak the same thing unless we have the Holy Spirit abiding in us and teaching us the same truth? Paul in his letters stress the importance of unity amongst the brethren:

Romans 12:16 Be of *the same mind* one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

Romans 15:5f Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to *be likeminded* one toward another according to Christ Jesus: that ye may with *one mind and one mouth glorify God*, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 16:17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

2 Corinthians 13:11 Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, *be of one mind*, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

Ephesians 4:2-7 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, *forbearing one another in love*; Endeavouring to keep the *unity* of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

Philippians 2:1 If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any

fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, *of one mind*.

These verses above are impossible to adhere to within ourselves, but are possible only through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Looking back to our verses, Paul says in verse 18 that he isn't surprised that there be divisions among the Corinthians. Why is that? Especially when he has stressed to them the importance of having no divisions among the brethren. He gives his reason in verse 19. That reason is that there **MUST** be *heresies* among them (*and us*) to show who among them (*and us*) are the approved. Does this mean that we go out and start causing division in the churches to see who the approved are? **Absolutely not!** God will bring about the division if needed in His perfect time! That is one thing that Paul is stating here in our verses. That when division does come, it is a God ordained sifting process. Divisions, which involve one side or the other will always reveal those whom God has approved and those whom He has not.

So, now it would help if we fully understood what the word "heresies" means. I have to admit that when I first read this passage I understood it to mean the modern rendering of the word. That being the teaching that is not doctrinally sound. I found out though that in the original Greek, it does not have that meaning. Let me quote a few helps that I have used to look up this word.

From the *Online Bible Lexicon*:

139 ...*haireisis**: Authorised (King James) Version—sect 5 times, heresy 4 times; total, 9 times in the KJV.

- 1) act of taking, capture: e.g. storming a city
- 2) choosing, choice
- 3) that which is chosen
- 4) a body of men following their own tenets (sect or party)
 - 4a) of the Sadducees
 - 4b) of the Pharisees
 - 4c) of the Christians
- 5) dissensions arising from diversity of opinions and aims

*Editor's Note: *haireisis* is the Anglicized spelling of the Greek word from which we get our word "heresy" directly. See Webster on **heresy**.

From Strong's *Greek Lexicon*:

139....*hairesis*; properly, a choice, i.e. (specially) a party or (abstractly) disunion:—heresy [which is the Greek word itself], sect.

This Greek word "*hairesis*" is used nine times in the New Testament. The scripture references are: (Acts 5:17; 15:5; 24:5,15; 26:5; 28:22; 1 Corinthians 11:19; Galatians 5:20; 2 Peter 2:1). This word is translated 'sect' five times and 'heresies' four times. Let's look at each of them.

Acts 5:17: Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the *sect* of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation,

In this verse *hairesis* is translated 'sect'. According to the context it just means a 'group' of the Jews.

Acts 15:5 But there rose up certain of the *sect* of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.

In this verse *hairesis* is translated 'sect' again and means another 'group' of the Jews.

Acts 24:5 For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the *sect* of the Nazarenes:

And here we have *hairesis* meaning a 'group' again.

Acts 24:14 But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call *heresy*, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets:

Paul is saying here that the *hairesis* (sect, heresy) which the Pharisees have labeled as a sect is the one in which Paul is following to worship the God of Scripture.

Acts 26:5 Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest *sect* of our religion I lived a Pharisee.

Again another group is being referred to here.

Acts 28:22 But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this *sect*, we know that every where it is spoken against.

1 Corinthians 11:19 For there must be also *heresies* among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

Galatians 5:19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred,

variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, *heresies*....

Here Paul is referring to the works of the flesh when he makes mention to heresies or groups of people.

2 Peter 2:1 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable *heresies*, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

I have given the meaning of the word "heresies" and also given how it is used from Scripture (which is the most important). One can only come to one conclusion from this. God is here saying that there **must** be sects or choices among the people of God in order to prove those of whom are the approved. One group goes one way and in that direction while the other group goes another way. For example, consider the Arminian group and the Grace group. Only one can be right because the two groups are diametrically opposed. They are as far apart as they can get. One is approved and the other is not. Also, we close with just a little thought. Could this word "heresy," meaning "sect," be used in reference to all the different denominations, especially those that are named after men?

One in hope,
Tom Adams

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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.