

The Remnant

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

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THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

*Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.
Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again
in the resurrection at the last day (John 11.23, 24).*

The Holy Scriptures declare the impartation of new spiritual life in the process of regeneration or quickening to be a spiritual resurrection. They also teach that there will be a resurrection of the body and a reunion of the body to the soul at the second coming of Christ. Both the just and the unjust shall have part in the bodily resurrection at the return of Christ. For the just, it shall be a resurrection unto life everlasting with a body like that of Christ's; a body fitted for the use of the sanctified spirit. For the unjust, it will be a resurrection unto condemnation.

First we shall examine a few portions of Scripture with reference to the spiritual resurrection. Some people believe this to be the only resurrection referred to in the Bible. The confusion on this point is the major cause of strife among some brethren.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live (John 5.25).” “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection (Romans 6.4,5).”

“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins...“Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)... “And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus... (Ephesians 2.1,5,6).“ “Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light (Ephesians 5.14).” “Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses (Colossians 2.12,13).”

As can clearly be seen, the quoted passages are some of the most powerful and beloved of scriptures regarding the spiritual resurrection from death in sin to life in Christ. However, there is far more to the subject of the resurrection than what has been mentioned. We now turn to some verses that bear upon the literal, physical, and actual resurrection of the body.

“So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep. O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me! If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands (Job 14.12-15).” “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in

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the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation (John 5.28,29).”

Paul, that bold and uncompromising preacher of the gospel of Christ, plainly declared his belief in the resurrection of the dead. “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: And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust (Acts 24.14,15).” “Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every

man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death (1 Corinthians 15.12-26)."

"So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body (1 Corinthians 15.42-44).

"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15.50-57)."

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

The bodies of the elect shall not enter as flesh and blood, but as glorified spiritual bodies just like that of their Lord. This shall be brought to pass by the working of his awesome power.

The power of the resurrection is correctly attributed to the Lord Jesus Christ. Because of his mighty triumph over death, hell, and the grave, Christ has prepared the way for all those chosen in him from eternity and redeemed and justified by his sacrificial death. The union of Christ and his elect assures their following him in the final resurrection.

Those who are alive at the victorious return of Christ shall not die, but will receive spiritual bodies without passing through death. "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (precede) them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words (1 Thessalonians 4.13-18)."

As the mortal body dies, decays, and dissolves away only to be transformed into something marvelous and glorious, so the outward world shall be cleansed and transformed into a wondrous glorified habitation for the saints of Jehovah. "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of

God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless (2 Peter 3.3-14).”

Who would dare call themselves believers in the Bible and deny the plain and concise statements that have been cited? Bible believers should believe that which is declared as inspired truth and not seek to pervert the word of the Lord. Admittedly, there is much, **MUCH**, that perishing worms of the dust do not and cannot know. This is all the more reason to cling to every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

“And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works (Revelation 20.13).” “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful (Revelation 21.1-5).”

Doubtless there will be some who disagree with some or all of what is written on this sublime subject. For this reason I have intentionally quoted liberally from the Holy Scriptures in order that they may see the folly of arguing against the word of God.

What has thus far been written has been taken directly from the Bible in order to positively assert the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. Some persons may still object to the teaching of a literal or physical resurrection. They will perhaps say that the writer has gone too far and literalized what should be kept as merely spiritual language. We will attempt to answer some of these objections.

Although the phrase “resurrection of the body” does not occur in the New Testament, the verses cited to distinguish the physical from the spiritual change are evident (John 5.28,29; Philippians 3.21; 1 Thessalonians 4.13-17). The term “spiritual body” found in 1 Corinthians 15.44 is a contradiction if it is understood only of a body, which is spirit. It can only be interpreted as a material body that has been perfectly changed to be the suitable vessel of glorified spirit. A totally spiritual interpretation is excluded when taking into consideration the denial of the apostle Paul. “And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some (2 Timothy 2.17,18).” The resurrection appears to be yet future as is stated by Paul in Acts 24.15. Both the just and unjust shall be raised.

“And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body (Romans 8.23).” In this verse it is clear that Christ came to save the whole man including the body, soul, and spirit. Likewise there are many texts that support the doctrine that the mortal bodies of the elect have been redeemed by the finished work of Christ.

“Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body. And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power. Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your **body**, and in your **spirit**, which are God’s (1 Corinthians 6.13-20).”

The indwelling of God the Holy Spirit has brought such a blessing upon the house of decaying flesh that

God will not permit his tabernacle to completely perish. Because of the indwelling of his sanctifying Spirit, God will raise up the mortal body of his saints. “But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you (Romans 8.11).”

The Lord Jesus when conversing with the Sadducees, who deny the resurrection, said, “I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living (Matthew 22.32).” The basis of this profound teaching is that though the saints are temporarily separated from their bodies (death), their spirits live with God and those bodies will rise again and be reunited with their spirits.

The nature and form of Christ’s literal and physical resurrection determines that of all of the children of God. “And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a **spirit**. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; **for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have**. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and **did eat** before them (Luke 24.36-43).” Evidently Jesus demonstrated to His disciples that he was not some spectral apparition or disembodied spirit, but a complete person, body and soul. He was capable of partaking of food and drink. He was substantial and real for he could be touched and handled by them. “Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing (John 20.27).”

As in the case of Christ, the same body that was laid in the tomb was raised again, although possessing new and wondrous powers. The Scriptures infer that not only will the saints have bodies, but also these will be the same bodies that slept in the dust transformed in a fascinating spiritual way. “And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to

everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt (Daniel 12.2).” Mortality shall be changed to immortality as in 1 Corinthians 15.53, 54. The denial of these scriptural teachings is to deny also the reality of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. “But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen (1 Corinthians 15.13).”

Modern day Sadducees, whatever they may call themselves, along with other numerous errors deny the resurrection. Paul shows that to deny this is to deny that Christ rose again; because to deny the possibility of his disciples rising is to deny that Christ arose. All true believers are vitally united to Christ and his resurrection could not have occurred without drawing in its train the resurrection of all the elect. “But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept (1 Corinthians 15.20).” Jesus was the first fruits of the harvest of the resurrection. The change of the saint’s body shall be like that of Christ—from corruptible to incorruptible—from physical to spiritual

The second coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as victorious King and the Final Judgment are clearly to be taken literally and to be expected as actual events. Why then should every child of grace not expect the resurrection to be just as real and to be looked for and expected by believers? “For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it (Romans 8.22-25).” In these verses man’s body is to be regarded as a portion of creation and as partaking in the deliverance from the curse. “And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful (Revelation 21.5).”

“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this (John 11.25,26)?” Reader do **you** believe this clear and plain statement from the Scriptures of Eternal Truth? Do not be as

those spoken of by the apostle Peter. “As also in all his (Paul) epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction (2 Peter 3.16).” All are subject to error and through our inherent weaknesses stumble at the truth on occasion, but by the grace of God His children shall know the truth and the truth shall make them free. “Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen (2 Peter 3.17,18).”

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ELECTION

by

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(Continued from last issue; Conclusion)

If any child of God is not clear in his or her mind as to the place election ought to have in their affections, let them examine their own experience, and see if God did not work alone with them, if he did not work effectually in them, if he did not in all things precede them, so that they have nothing spiritual that they did not receive. Let them see if they are not constrained by that very experience to confess that God must have chosen them, else they would never have chosen him. This is election in their experience.

7th. Election always implies its opposite rejection, or passing by. This is an insurmountable stumbling block to the theory of universal salvation. If God’s people are elected to salvation, (and it has been shown that they are) then it follows from the law of language itself that all are not saved. If all are to be saved, election is a misnomer—a word without any meaning. Men of the Bible are spoken of as being elected; therefore it is infallibly certain that some men are rejected. This is true as a rule. Choice always takes one and leaves one. Whatever we

choose, we reject some other object of the same class. I have been opposed to applying the term election to the spiritual life of God’s people, because it would of necessity imply that a portion of that life or spiritual existence was rejected. It seems conclusive that *men* are elected, and *men* are rejected.

8th. Because God’s people are an elect people, the term is also applied to our Lord Jesus Christ himself. (Isa. 42:1) “Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine *elect* in whom my soul delighteth.” The term here means just what it means everywhere else, that is, *my chosen one*. Compared with him, all beauty, all glory, all excellence, fade away. He is the only and well-beloved Son, and his people are all chosen in him. They are also redeemed in him, kept in him, and shall be glorified with him. The very hope of the believer is Christ in them. All the blessings of eternal life are treasured up in him. It is he whom God accepts, and we in him, and by him we come to God and find acceptance. Thus he is all and in all to his redeemed ones. Of God he is made unto them wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. Compared with Jesus, all worlds, all beings, whether heavenly or earthly, fade into darkness, and over them all he has the pre-eminence, and is therefore in the highest and most glorious sense “the elect of God, holy and beloved.” “Elect” is one of the precious, excellent names applied to him, to show that beside him all things are passed by, and he only is worthy to be honored and glorified in the highest, forever and forever. God’s people are not chosen because they are of themselves lovely or excellent, but are chosen that they may be made lovely and holy; but Jesus is the elect of God because he is worthy to receive all honor and praise and blessing in heaven and in earth.

9th. One of the commonest objections to the doctrine of election is the assertion that it would, if true, ascribe injustice to God in his dealings with men. To this it might be amply sufficient to reply, that all we have to ascertain is, what does God teach us in his word concerning the matter? And Paul, in Romans 9, severely rebukes those who would think of replying against God, by seeking to bring him to account at the bar of their own puny reason. What startling force and withering rebuke are in those words of Paul, “Nay, but, O man, [as if he had said, “O worm”] who art thou [truly but a presumptuous fool] that repliest against God? [To bring God’s decrees to the

standard of our finite reason, then, is to become a rebel at once.] Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" etc. We are not called upon to apologize for God's decrees. It is only our place to declare his word. He will justify himself. It would better become us to say, in the first place, God's word is true. God is holy and just and good. I may fail to always trace his holiness and justice in what he does, but still I know that he is just. When I read his word, therefore, let my first inquiry be, What has God said? And when I have found out, let me believe it. Now if such an one finds that election is a truth taught in the Bible, he will believe it because God has taught it. And I think it has been shown that it is a Bible truth, and an experimental truth. But while I might leave the matter here, I feel like adding a few thoughts in reply to this objection, which I doubt not keeps many a child of God away from the full enjoyment of this gracious doctrine. There is no injustice in election:

First, because all were lost, and under the curse of the fall, and justly condemned to eternal ruin. God was under no obligation to fallen man to save anybody. All might therefore have been justly left to perish. This, too, is a truth felt in Christian experience. The only man that denies it is he who never felt his just condemnation.

Second. Therefore election is not the cause of ruin to any of the race of men. It adds nothing to the weight of woe hanging over the impenitent. It works no hardship.

Thirdly, it is the blessed cause of salvation to thousands, who could not otherwise be saved. Why should it be so abused then? Will men arraign God before them, and say that because he sees fit, in infinite mercy, to save some, who are unworthy, therefore it is not infinitely just for him to inflict vengeance upon the rest of the ungodly?

Fourth. Why do not men argue that Deity should also provide salvation for fallen angels, as well as fallen men?

Fifth, if God is *bound* to provide *one chance* of salvation for all fallen men, why is he not equally bound to provide another chance—a hundred chances?

10th. If election is unjust, then is God unjust in the daily dispensations of his providence? We see his daily providence, and we know he is just and true in

all his ways therein; but yet, if we can accuse him of injustice in election, by the same train of reasoning precisely we may conclude he is unjust in his daily administration of the affairs of men. What shall we say when we see one man wise, his brother a fool; one man strong, his brother weak; one child with a drunken, degraded father, another with all that earth can afford; one born rich, the other poor; one born in civilized lands, another in savage countries? Is God unjust here? No, surely not. Then neither can it be shown that injustice attaches to election.

In conclusion, I would say, that with all who accept the plain letter of Bible truth there is enough to settle the doctrine of election in the ninth chapter of Romans. Whether Paul alludes there to Jacob and Esau as individuals, or to their descendants as nations, he in either case is sustaining the doctrine of election beyond all controversy. And whether Paul looked at the men, or the two manner of people who descended from them, he clinches the argument concerning election, so that it can never be assailed.

A brother said once in my hearing, while speaking of this strong foundation truth, "I am sure that if God had not chosen me before the foundation of the world, he never would have chosen me afterward." As I close this letter, I believe this is my feeling regarding the matter.

As ever, your brother in hope of eternal life.

—Elder F. A. Chick
Reisterstown, MD
Feb. 4, 1880

ONE SALVATION

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. (Genesis 49.10)

I believe that the Christ Event (from conception to ascension) was for the singular purpose of effecting the eternal salvation of his elect who are called and secured in him unto eternal life. As a part of this work he also gave a rudimentary foundation for the existent church and endowed the Apostles with

spiritual knowledge and authority to establish this church in the world and to give it all of the knowledge and authority necessary to carry it through time until time is no more. The church needs no other resources than those given in the Scriptures for its mission of feeding the sheep and comforting Jerusalem.

I also believe that this eternal salvation is one salvation. It is from eternity to eternity, which also includes a time element. By this I mean that the work of salvation was begun in eternity before time was, it was accomplished in the finished work of the Anointed One in time, and shall be finally consummated in Eternity when time is concluded.

In support of this thesis, I offer the following exegesis of a few familiar and favorite scriptures.

First consider Galatians 4.4-5: “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” Pay particular attention to the phrase “the fulness of time.” This little phrase is fundamental to understanding the precision of God’s predestination of all things, in every place, at all times. We ought to understand that everything was in perfect readiness for the advent of Christ into the world of time. This precision included the social order of the world with its good and bad elements. The ruthless but effective Roman government, the systems of trade and knowledge, the dispersion of the Jews with their religious fervor and the assimilation of other cultures and religions into the culture of Rome were all involved in this fullness of time. There was no happenstance—it was all precisely designed.

As essential part of this timely event was the development of the Greek language and its ascendancy to the preferred language for writings and discourse of the time. It can be fairly said that the Greek language was the most precise written language ever developed for the exchange and preservation of thoughts, words and deeds. Again, it is no coincidence that this was the language in which the records of the eyewitnesses to the Christ Event, and the instructions to the primitive church were recorded to become the God-breathed New Testament.

It is just as essential to the church that, as Paul and the others were intimately schooled (by common use and formal education) in this great precise language, God also insured that the language would survive and

there would be men (scholars) who would study, know, interpret and translate the classical language for the benefit of the rest of us. Many of them gave their wealth, health and very lives in the labor. Some of them were rascals, but thank God, their work was for the benefit of the church. It is because of this Spirit endowed work that we, in 2005, can use the labor of those who came before to exegete the Scriptures.

A brief exposition of a few favorite scriptures will serve to illustrate this and enlighten us on the One Salvation. The precision of the Greek verb tense in the following samples will show how carefully the Scriptures were given, written, and preserved.

In Galatians 4.4-5 (above) and 3.13: (“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.”), Paul wrote to the local church in the Roman province of Galatia and, because this letter was sealed into the canon of the New Testament by the Holy Spirit, to the universal Church. Within this letter he avowed that Christ hath redeemed us. Here the English ‘redeemed’ is an accurate translation of the Greek, but an understanding of the fuller meaning of the Greek enables us to have a better knowledge of what the apostle meant to convey. By the use of this word, Paul tells us that Christ secured (bought for the purpose of) the elect from the bondage of the law of sin and death unto himself for his own use, pleasure and glory.

An important point to be made here is that the Greek verbals ‘hath redeemed’ and ‘to redeem’ are not the same as English past and future tenses. They are in the manuscript in the Greek aorist tense. Professors Dana and Mantey in their *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, tell us that the “aorist tense is the most expressive of the tenses.” It is important to know that the Greek verb tenses convey no essential notion of time or action as the English tenses do. They express the kind or quality of action. This helps to understand that the Greek aorist tense presents an action as simply occurring without reference to progress and without temporal significance. It states that an entire action, without regard to time, is simply done. It is accomplished action. The above verses, then, tell us that **God in Christ has bought his people as an accomplished fact for his own pleasure.**

Similarly in 2 Tim. 1.9-10 (“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our

works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel”), Paul uses the aorist in an emphatic construction to declare that God’s people are, as an accomplished fact, saved and called.

In Matthew 1.21 (“And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.”) the Holy Spirit is teaching us through the historical narrative that the advent of Jesus is for the express purpose of saving (redeeming) his people. Here the manuscripts use the Greek future tense which expresses an action as expected to occur in some future time. Thus the Holy Spirit uses the historical narrative to declare, as an accomplished fact, that a virgin shall conceive and birth the Saviour (Joshua, Jesus) and he shall save (redeem) his people from their sin and the penalty thereof at some time future to the revelation.

No discussion of the precision of God’s work in preparing the Greek language for the Christ Event would be complete without including Ephesians 2.5 and 8: (“Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, by grace ye are saved...For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God”). Here Paul wrote using the Greek perfect tense with the passive voice. Of course the passive denotes an action happening to a subject without his participation. The perfect tense has the connotation of past, present, and future. **Here the apostle by the Spirit emphatically declares the Saints have been saved, are being saved, and will finally be saved.**

The purpose of all that has preceded is to state that this writer believes that the one salvation of God’s elect is an accomplished fact. There is a timely quality to the work of Jesus as well as an eternal one. God purposed it in eternity before the beginning of time. He foretold it in the historical record, described it in the writings of the prophets, declared its imminence in the New Testament narrative, and explained it in the revealed writings of the Apostles. He blessed the church with an anticipation of its fulfillment (read Revelation 22.17 and 20.). His great work in and for his people will finally be consummated in the eternity to come when time is no more.

Let us rejoice together in the blessed hope of our salvation designed before the beginning, and completed in time with the precious expectation that where he is we shall finally be.

—*Like One Alone*

BORN OF GOD: THE HEAVENLY BIRTH

The doctrine of the “new birth” as taught in the Holy Scriptures is at first glance rather elementary for many of God’s people, yet the truth of it so unique that for thousands of years, from Adam to the Apostle John, the terms “born of God” and “born again” did not exist. That is not to say that God’s Holy Spirit was not “new birthing” the saints of the Old Testament era, for He most assuredly was. The marvelous truth of salvation and redemption was there right from the start, in the book of beginnings, Genesis. However, to repeat, the phrases “born again” and “born of God” are not found in the Bible until the gospel of John. This great aspect of the mystery of Godliness was revealed during the earthly ministry of our blessed Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

The word, “born” with all of its variations, beget, bare, bring forth, begat, begotten, etc. is used almost 500 times in the Old Testament. By far the vast majority of these are references to physical births, and in Genesis alone where many of these are recorded, the words are used almost 175 times.

The Greek word, *gennao* is in the New Testament over 90 times, again for the most part referring to someone being born physically. As expected, in Mathew chapter 1, which describes the earthly lineage of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit used the word many times. To my knowledge, the very LAST time the physical birth of a baby is recorded in all of the Holy Bible, is the grand proclamation describing the birth of the LORD JESUS CHRIST! When the King of Kings was born in the incarnation, there was no more need to record the birth of anyone else. He is the last Adam, 1 Corinthians 15.45; the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, Revelation 21.6; the Beloved Son, 2 Peter 1.17; the Good Shepherd, John 10.11, 14; the Great Shepherd, Hebrews 13.20; the Chief

Shepherd, 1 Peter 5.4; the Bishop of our souls, 1 Peter 2.25; the Captain of our Salvation, Hebrews 2.10; the CREATOR, Colossians 1.13-18; the Door, John 10.7-9; the Deliverer, Romans 11.26; the Everlasting Father, Isaiah 9.6; Emmanuel (God with us) Matthew 1.23; the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God Revelation 3.14; the Faithful and True, Revelation 19.11; First and Last, Revelation 1.17; the Light of the world, John 8.12 and 9.5; GOD, John 20.28; Governor, Matthew 2.6; He Who IS, He Who Was, and He Who Is to Come, Revelation 1.4; Head of the Church, Ephesians 5.23; Image of the Invisible GOD, Colossians 1.15 and 2 Corinthians 4.4; Israel's King and Redeemer, Isaiah 44.6; Jehovah (the Old Testament LORD), Isaiah 26.4; Jesus the Son of God, Hebrews 4.14; King of Israel, John 1.49; King of Saints, Revelation 15.3; Lamb of God, John 1.29 and 36; Lord God Almighty, Revelation 4.8; Man, 1 Timothy 2.5; Mediator, Hebrews 12.24, Name above every name, Philippians 2.8-9; Nazarene, Matthew 2.23; Only begotten Son of God, John 3.18; Our Passover, 1 Corinthians 5.7; Prince of Life, Acts 3.15; Prophet, Acts 3.22; Redeemer, Job 19.25; Isaiah 54. 5-8, Resurrection and Life, John 11.25; Saviour, Luke 2.11; Son of God, Mark 1.1; Teacher from God, John 3.2; the Way, the Truth, and the Life, John 14.6; Upholder of all things, Hebrews 1.3; a Witness, Isaiah 55.4; and the Word of God, John 1.1 and Revelation 19.13.

These are only a few of all the names and attributes listed in the Scriptures about our Almighty God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Someone has named almost three hundred. The elect of God will continue to be shown more of His exceeding riches of Grace and Kindness throughout the ages to come (Ephesians 2.7)! Therefore is it any wonder that the Incarnation of the Lord Jesus is the last recorded physical birth in all of the Bible?

The literal, spiritual birth of God's children must and does happen to each and every one of His elect before they enter eternal glory. Let's briefly scan the verses that declare this truth. They are almost all in the Apostle John's writings. In 1 Peter 1.23 the phrase "born again" is found, although it is a slightly different Greek word according to some dictionaries. For this study on the spiritual birth we're only looking at the words *born*, *begat*, and *begotten*. There are, of

course, obvious synonyms; regeneration, eternal life, quickened, redemption, and sometimes, "saved," salvation, etc. For an example we use the word regeneration a good deal; however it is used only twice in Scripture, both in English and in Greek. And the Titus 3.5 verse seems to be the only one synonymous to the "heavenly birth." So the terms "born or begotten of God," "born again" are more prevalent in the Holy Scriptures' revelation.

Some will try to make a big difference between conception and the birth. Why? It may be because they want to make the conception a work of God, and the birth a work of man. It's true, in the physical there is a difference; however even in the natural there was never anyone born that wasn't conceived. It is also interesting to note that in Mathew 1.20 the word "conceived" is the same Greek word—*gennaō*, as "begat," "born," etc. In the grand purpose of God, all the elect would be spiritually conceived by Him, and ultimately "born again" of His Holy Spirit. God's children are never spiritually aborted.

As stated earlier, the Apostle John was the first inspired of God to literally pen the words, *born again* or *born of God*. "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name: Which were BORN, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (John 1.10ff)."

The Lord Jesus created the world, and HE came into the world, and yet mankind left to itself will never recognize Him as Jehovah God. Not then and not now. Oh, people will acknowledge Him as a good man, a historical figure, someone that we should emulate; but never as a perfect resurrected Saviour that paid for all the sins of His elect family with absolutely no strings attached. Even His own Jewish people for the most part did not receive Him. Not yet. But thanks be to God a remnant did, right then and there in Judea and Galilee. WHY? Because John the Baptist preached a "Billy Graham-Just as I am" type message, and folks were emotionally moved? No. We must read further; they received power to become children of God and believe on His name because they were born of God! He, not man, is the

first cause of this heavenly birth. Plainly we're told it is NOT of our blood, [race, ethnic group], the will of our flesh, nor any other will of any and all human beings. Man has a will of carnal flesh and mind; however, left to himself, he will never receive heavenly things from a Sovereign God. There it is in black and white, not my words or any other person's but only in God's inspired word. Read it again: "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (John 1.13)." How the Devil and all his fallen angels must hate this verse. He has deceived the reprobate into believing the lie of the so-called "free will" of man. The Lord God already gave His verdict about this pompous and prideful beast, Satan—the Devil, or Lucifer: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! *how* art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, **I will** ascend into heaven, **I will** exalt my throne above the stars of God: **I will** sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: **I will** ascend above the heights of the clouds; **I will** be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit (Isaiah 14.12ff)."

In this passage there are five proud "I wills" of Lucifer, who then passed them on to our first parents in the Garden of Eden; Adam and Eve. We've all inherited that same self-will, proud, free-will conceited ideas from them. So no marvel that the fallen race of mankind believes that they are the ones deciding their own personal eternal destiny. It is a natural and normal reason why all people are somewhat religious—at least to various degrees—and unless born from above, will always worship the god of self-free-will. That god comes in many colors and flavors. Could this be another reason why the Lord Jesus continued the subject of the new birth in John chapter 3?

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God (John 3.3)."

Here is the blessed Son of God, Creator of the universe, condescending to us mere mortals. We are as Nicodemus, sinful, ignorant man, unfit for heaven, spiritually dead, unable to stand alone in the presence of *the* MAN, GOD Himself manifest in the

flesh. The Lord Jesus used the double emphasis, "verily, verily" or truly, truly, amen and amen, not to exaggerate—He never does—but to underscore the truth of this great Biblical doctrine, the heavenly birth. Never spake a man like this MAN. By that time, human beings had been on the earth approximately 4,000 years or so. There wasn't any Roman, Greek, Persian, Babylonian, Egyptian or any other philosopher of whatever stripe, who had ever spoken of being "born again." Nicodemus was astounded and incredulous, his own Pharisee brethren had never taught him of this new heavenly birth. And without that divine experience no man can even see, let alone enter the kingdom of God!

"Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God (John 3.4-5)."

It seems fair to say that perhaps in a moment, or maybe sometime later, Nicodemus, whose name means "victorious among his people," would become a blessed recipient of this holy birth. Only the Sovereign God would know the precise time. But for now, Nicodemus was perplexed, and even with all his formal education, he could only murmur something about a grown person entering the second time into his mother's womb. History has been rather hard on Nicodemus. He and many others of his kin thought salvation was by race, his own Jewish flesh and blood, and not by the heavenly birth. The Lord Jesus would tell him in a few moments, (John 3.15-16) that eternal life was given to the world of His chosen beloved family, not only of the Jews but also among the Gentile world. Had we been in Nicodemus's place, we might have asked even sillier questions. The Lord answers him again with the two "verily-verily"s. How important it is that we take heed to His words. "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Born of water and the Spirit. Why water? People have debated the issue for centuries; this must mean a physical water baptism, or it is the mother's water during childbirth. No. These quick answers don't quite satisfy a seeker of truth, for the Lord is telling us of

a heavenly birth. Was He not describing two different types of water to the woman of Samaria? In John 4 we're given the account, particularly verses 13-14: "Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again," in reference to the physical liquid the human body needs every day. "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." This is very different water than H₂O; it is the heavenly water of life, and can only come from above! It is given to each of the elect of God at the time of their spiritual birth, springing up to everlasting life. Notice the four shalls in this verse of God's word. The Lord Jesus said it, therefore it shall be done! It appears this same heavenly water is also applied in the daily walk of the believer. For we read of the one true Church whom Christ loved, and gave Himself for it, Ephesians 5.26: "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of WATER by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Jesus Christ came by water and blood, the Holy Spirit tells us in John's epistle (1 John 5.6). "This is He that came by WATER and BLOOD, *even* Jesus Christ; not by WATER only, but by WATER and BLOOD. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth." As the literal streams of water and blood flowing from the Savior's pierced side are inseparable, so is the little child of God when united to Him in the new birth of water and spirit. All praise to Him!

The Lord spoke very directly of the two births, the first of the flesh, the second of the Holy Spirit. There are similarities and vast differences between the two. He does not say much about the first, because everyone already knows about the physical birth. That one is easy. It is the second birth that is impossible for natural man to understand. But remember they're both called births, which is an important similarity.

John 3.6: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." John 3.7: "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." First let's ask a few simple questions regarding the fleshly or physical birth. Did you "make

a decision" to be conceived? If so, why did you decide to be born in the 20th century? We all seem to want to go back to the "good old days" so why not the 19th, or for that matter the first century? Or why not wait till next year to be born, the world might be full of wonderful people by then? Did you pick your parents of royal heritage, high IQs, handsome physiques, or was your desire to be born into a poor, peasant family? Perhaps as an orphan? None of that suited you, so you just simply "decided" to be middle-class? Did you choose the color of your skin, eyes, and hair? Why weren't you 100 percent exactly like someone else? On and on we can ask strange questions, but the universal truth is, we had absolutely no choice in our physical, fleshly birth. Our "free will" was not consulted, even in the naming of ourselves! Every human being with a reasonably sound mind will surely agree, that we had no choice in our natural birth. But when it comes to the spiritual birth, almost all religionists claim we can "exercise our free will" and decide to be born (again) and go to heaven. Why this stunning reversal?? The Lord said in verse 7, "Marvel not"; yet most people today do marvel and think you're crazy if you tell them that man makes no choice in being born again. If man has no "say in the matter" in his first birth, which is only physical, and eventually he will die, how can he possibly "make a choice" in the second spiritual birth unto eternal life, lasting forever? Utterly impossible!

Listen to the Lord once more, in John 3.8: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." He is indeed the wisest MAN that ever lived. He taught a most profound truth in a very simple way. He used natural illustrations to teach the supernatural. Here the Lord irrefutably tells us the Holy Spirit comes and goes without any help from man. Like the wind—the Greek word is the same for Spirit—blows where it wills, we hear the sound [voice] thereof but cannot tell when it comes or where it goes. The eternal, all-knowing Lord God who can not lie, said that we do not dictate the wind-spirit. That seems obvious to His children, but modern man thinks he can direct the Holy Spirit. His puny effort is like the 6 inch circular fan against a mighty hurri-

cane. Yet men in their unregenerate arrogance will keep saying, we need money to save souls, *god* needs our help to get people to heaven. All the while, they drive fine cars and live in nice homes and eat rather well. Why don't they live like paupers and go door to door all around the world, because after all, according to them, everyone needs their particular brand of religion in making that right choice to be born again. Hypocrites. Some indeed do compass sea and land to make a proselyte. Read about those characters in Matthew 23.15

According to the Lord Jesus Christ, who in the last clause of verse eight of John 3 said, "so is every one that is born of the Spirit." All those born of the Spirit were completely passive, actually spiritually dead before the quickening came upon them. Ephesians 2.1. This is crucial in understanding the heavenly birth. A dead man, either natural or spiritual cannot "make a decision" to be born again. Each and *every one* (it's the same Greek word as *whosoever* in John 3.16) of the elect of God will experience this spiritual birth before he or she leaves this world. They must. It could happen early in life, like John the Baptist, or at the door of death, like the thief on the cross. We cannot tell when the Holy Spirit comes, or where He goes upon His Sovereign way. He is the Absolute, Triune God, and no man even in his best state, tells Him what to do.

Some evidences of being Born of God

We move on to the next set of Scriptures giving us a few clues about this mysterious work of God, the new birth. These are also found in the Apostle John's writings, but here in his epistles. Remember, we are only looking at the "born of God" verses.

1 John 2.29: "If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him." Someone might say, "See, you have to do righteousness to be born of Him." Is this really what the verse says, and therefore we have a contradiction? No. The context in which the Holy Spirit had John pen these words shows they were written to little children of God (1 John 2.1, 28). So they were already "born of God." Also we're told in the latter verse that when Christ shall appear we may have confidence and not be ashamed at His coming. If ye know that Christ is righteous (just), and none of God's born again children believes oth-

erwise, everyone that doeth righteousness would include their believing or having faith in Him alone for salvation, since faith is a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5.22). So those that do righteousness are born of Him. We don't do righteousness to become born—all our own righteousness is as filthy rags anyway. Therefore the Heavenly Birth always precedes any outward fruit in the believer, if even for a moment.

Here is the next "born of God" verse, 1 John 3.9: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." This has puzzled and consternated many of God's little children during their earthly sojourn, particularly at the beginning of their experience. But as they grow in grace and in knowledge of the truth, this passage brings great comfort. The heavenly seed, which is planted at the new birth, *cannot* sin because that same spiritual seed is from the Holy God who is *not* the author of sin.

The born-again believer has an inward and outward man, and he knows this (a) from Scripture—Romans 7.22: "For I delight in the law of God after the *inward* man"; 2 Corinthians 4.16: "For which cause we faint not; but though our *outward* man perish, yet the *inward man* is renewed day by day; and also (b) by his own personal experience. There is warfare between the two, well described by the Holy Spirit in Romans 7-8 and elsewhere. It is the way of all the saints of God.

Also here in John's epistle, we read in 1 John 1.8, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." And again, in verse 10, "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." If any claim they have no sin, God's word and truth is not in them. Serious words. So then, this must refer to the believer's outward, Adamic, inherited, sinful man that perishes and dies, or else is to be gloriously changed at the last trump. No one goes to the eternal heaven in an earthly, sinful, mortal body. Impossible. But thanks be to God, He places His seed within the earthly tabernacle of each and every one of His elect sheep, and they never perish but have everlasting life.

Another "fruit" the born or begotten of God are blessed with, is love or charity (Greek, *agape*). 1 John 4.7 "Beloved, let us love one another: for love

is of God; and every one that loveth is *born of God*, and knoweth God.” 1 John 5.1: “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is *born of God*: and every one that loveth Him that begat loveth him also that is *begotten of Him*.” In their inward man they have a great love for their Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. And they love Him only because He first loved them! And that love will grow on and on into eternity. This is far beyond any earthly love (there are other definitions for that kind). It extends past that of husband for wife and children. This love is of God and must therefore be perfect and unfettered by human effort. You can not drum it up and make it happen. There are many imitations but this love is unfeigned and spotlessly pure. It lies in the bosom of every little born-again child of God. Many times they wish for a greater indwelling of this love—sometimes called charity—but nonetheless this fruit remains regardless of its size. He loves the Triune God, the finished work and person of the Lord Jesus Christ, His Eternal decree, His covenant, His Sovereign electing grace, His substitutionary death, His blood, His resurrection, His intercession, His second coming, His Holy written Word, and on and on. Be this love ever so small, yet he does love all this and more. He is also made to love the true brethren of God. Whoever and wherever they are, in heaven, or scattered upon the earth as the Lord providentially brings them together. He loves the apostles and brethren of the New Testament, the prophets and patriarchs of the Old. It matters not what age, gender, color of skin, or whether they are Gentile or Jew; if they have been begotten from above, he loves them and will forever. Outwardly there are vast differences, but inwardly and secretly they have one thing in common. All are born of God, and that not of themselves!

The verse also declares everyone that is born of God, knoweth God. Intimately. Does that mean they know everything about God? No, not in this world; that knowledge will continue to grow in the ages to come. However, this same knowledge begins here in time at the “new birth.” It is a spiritual relationship, the children do *know* their Heavenly Father. They also believe Jesus is the Christ. Not “a” Christ but *the* Christ, Messiah, the Anointed one WHO alone takes away sin. They rejoice in the words of

the Angel of the Lord, to Joseph about Mary: “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins (Matthew 1.21).” The Name Jesus means, Jehovah is Saviour! Indeed He is the one true Saviour. All the “begotten of God” know precisely that. They believe and trust only Him for their salvation.

The last two verses in all of the Bible with the particular phrases, *born of God* are in 1 John 5. 1 John 5.4: For whatsoever is *born of God* overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. 1 John 5.18: “We know that whosoever is *born of God* sinneth not; but he that is *begotten of God* keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.” Here, then, is the final victory for all those “born of God.” They are ultimately victorious over the evil, self-will, pagan world that surrounds them, they’re victorious over their own carnal, fallen flesh, the outward man that besets them day by day. And they overcome the great arch-enemy of the saints, that is the Devil and all his host of fallen angels and unholy spirits. How do they overcome? By their own free-will efforts, works, or righteousness? Never! They could as easily make a vast universe, as create the heavenly birth within themselves. With man these things are utterly impossible, but God makes His born again child an overcomer by the **blood of the Lamb** (Revelation 12.11). He gives them of His faith, for without faith it is impossible to please Him. Faith is given as a free gift by a faithful God to each and every one of His own (Ephesians 2.8). The Wicked One can not touch them because they’re born of God. O, he can harass, discourage, influence, and raise a host of charges against the child of God. But the Devil can never possess—that is what the Greek word for touch means, intimate relationship—because he is begotten of God and bought with a great price. The Bible is full of passages teaching the everlasting life of the born again child of God. Tell me, how could one lose eternal life? It certainly would not be eternal to begin with if mere man could “lose” it.

Those born of God believe the Bible, and keep the words of the Lord Jesus Christ: “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out

of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one (John 10.27ff)."

So concludes this little study of the doctrine of the "new birth." It seems obvious from the Apostle John's writings that one does not need to know how to be born to actually experience the birth from above! All the elect saints of God of all the ages have been, or will be born of God! And although they are only a remnant of the whole of humanity—Romans 11.5—they are one in the sight and purpose of Almighty God, and will be literally brought together by Him, a multitude which no one man can number! "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb (Revelation 7.9)."

Truly those begotten or born of God will continue to gladly declare, now and forever, that their heavenly birth in its very first conception is a gracious and precious gift from the Triune God, the Lord Jesus Christ. He alone is worthy of all honor and glory!

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HOW JESUS, THE CREATOR, WAS GREETED

He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (John 1.11-13)

Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him. (Matthew 12.14)

TOPHET REVISITED

And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart.—Jeremiah 7:31

Because they have forsaken me, and have estranged this place, and have burned incense in it unto other gods, whom neither they nor their fathers have known, nor the kings of Judah, and have filled this place with the blood of innocents; they have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind.—Jeremiah 19:4, 5

Tophet was synonymous with a place in the valley of Hinnom outside the southern walls of Jerusalem. It was a beautiful place once used by some of Judah's kings as a park or garden.

"And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as did David his father. Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods (1 Kings 11.6-8)." It is thought that King Solomon probably built this "high place" for his strange wives to worship their strange gods in or near Tophet, the valley of Hinnom (Smith's *Bible Dictionary*). Here, Ahaz and Manasseh burnt their children as human sacrifices (2 Chronicles 28.1ff; 33.1-6).

To stop this hideous practice of burning babies alive as offerings to the heathen gods (Baal, Chemosh, and Molech), king Josiah defiled Tophet by turning it into a cesspool and garbage dump where waste, filth, garbage, and dead animals were burned. Think: city dump and waste-water treatment plant combined.

The fires burned constantly, but flies and maggots nevertheless multiplied in the filth and the carcasses of the decaying beasts. Through the years, the name of the valley of Hinnom, *Ge Hinnom*, was corrupted to Ge-Henna or **Gehenna**, which the Lord Jesus aptly used as a picture of Hades, or Hell: "it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go

into hell [*Gehenna*], into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched (Mark 9.43, 45, 47, etc.).” *Gehenna* occurs twelve times in the New Testament; each time it is translated in the King James Version (KJV) as **Hell**.

Now, along comes a Conditionalist—a Mr. Hodges—who wants to revive an old argument of Elder Claude Cayce’s that supposedly refutes the doctrine of **the absolute predestination of all things**. (Note: If anyone is repulsed by my calling Mr. H. a Conditionalist, I point out that in his e-mail he himself introduces the term “CONDITIONAL TIME SALVATION” [his capitalization] and assures the reading public that “*Anytime [sic] you see the word ‘IF’ in the Bible, there is a condition to be met.*” On that note, I hope, Lord willing, to take up the subject of the word “IF” at another time.)

Last July, Mr. Hodges publicly challenged some absolute Predestinarians via e-mail by using the Scripture verses at the head of this article. There was nothing in his argument that had not been propounded by Elder Cayce and his people in the early twentieth century, and there was nothing that has not already been adequately answered long before now.

We have before addressed these texts from Jeremiah in *The Remnant*. Elder J. F. Poole wrote on Jeremiah 19.5 in the September-October issue of 1999. We will now briefly look at the texts again and what Mr. Hodges said about them. I hope to briefly address these points: (1) What the verses in Jeremiah say; (2) What Mr. Hodges says; (3) Scriptural proof that predestination *does* govern the actions of men as well as people; and (4) A standing challenge.

1. What the verses say

Jeremiah 7.31: ... *neither came it into my heart*. The question immediately occurs to us, *what* was it that never came into God’s heart? That the people of Israel would burn their children as human sacrifices? If that were the case, then the Lord simply, undeniably, would not be omniscient. No, read the text again. It simply says that **it never came into God’s heart to command them to build the high places of Tophet or to burn their children in the fire**.

Likewise, the text in Jeremiah 19.4f says that **God neither commanded Israel or spake it to Israel to build the high places of Baal in order to burn their sons for burnt offerings unto Baal, and it did not**

come into God’s mind to command Israel to do so or to speak it to Israel to do so.

2. What Mr. Hodges says

After quoting the above texts, Mr. Hodges argues thusly:

“If God commanded all things, then this heinous act would have to be included.

“Here is at least one thing in the Bible that God had NOTHING WHATSOEVER TO DO WITH! IT DIDN’T EVEN CROSS HIS MIND!

“Yet, God is still totally sovereign! It did not happen independently of His control for one billionth of a second.

“Predestination deals with God’s people, what happens to God’s people. God doesn’t predestinate actions, but people.”

The god of Mr. Hodges, you will note, was completely blindsided by what the idolaters did. It never once occurred to his god that the Israelites might do such a thing. Conditionalism’s god did not anticipate any of the sacrifices of human infants. Mr. Hodges professes to believe in a “totally sovereign god” who never anticipated such things as the sacrifices of these specific human babies, in spite of everything’s being dependent on his control, down to the nanosecond. Whether these babies who were burned alive were among the elect or not, Mr. Hodges’ god was more surprised than anyone when they died. Hear him ask, “*Where did all these babies come from?*” Their excruciatingly painful, fiery deaths and their subsequent arrival in the next world would not have even occurred to him. Mr. Hodges assures us, “IT DIDN’T EVEN CROSS HIS MIND!” We are made to wonder what else might happen that the Conditionalist god doesn’t know about?

3. Scriptural proof that predestination *does* govern actions and events

Some form of the Greek word for predestination ($\pi\rho\omicron\omicron\rho\rho\rho\rho\rho\rho$, or as it is transliterated, *proorizo*; see the Greek dictionary, item #4309, in the back of Strong’s Concordance) occurs five times in the New Testament. These five times are as follows:

A. Romans 8.29: “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate [$\pi\rho\omicron\omicron\rho\rho\rho\rho\rho\rho$ (*proorisen*):

third person singular, aorist 1, indicative] to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.”

B. Romans 8.30: “Moreover whom he did **predestinate** [προωρισεν (proorisen): third person singular, aorist 1, indicative], them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”

C. Ephesians 1.5: “...According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having **predestinated** [προορισας (proorisas): nominative singular masculine participle Aorist 1 active] us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will...(Ephesians 1.4-5).”

D. Ephesians 1.11: “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being **predestinated** [προορισθεντες (prooristhentes): nominative plural masculine participle aorist 2] according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will....”

E. The fifth and final occurrence of προοριζω (proorizo) is in Acts 4.28. There the disciples are praying to God. To get the running context, we here quote the entire prayer as given in verses 24-30: “Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for **to do** whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel **determined before** [προωρισεν, proorisen: third person singular, aorist 1, indicative] **to be done**. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.”

We call the reader’s attention to verse 28: “...for **to do** whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel **determined before** (προωρισεν, proorisen, **predestinated**) to be done.” Here in Acts 4.28, letter for letter, προωρισεν (proorisen) is the exact same

form of the word as is found in Romans 8.29 and 30, where it is twice translated as **predestinated**.

Interested and perceptive readers will note two things:

(1) it is **whatsoever** God’s hand determined or predestinated to be **done**—an act, not a person. The persons (*who*) were included in God’s decree: Herod, Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel.

(2) It was not a *who* that was predestinated to come to pass; it was a *what*: **whatsoever** was predestinated **to be done: verb, action, done**. It was certainly not, as Conditionalists insist, merely *whosoever* was predestinated. The Lord predestinated whatsoever was **done**. The text, the very word, disproves Mr. Hodges’ position that “Predestination deals with God’s people, what happens to God’s people. God doesn’t predestinate actions, but people.”

4. A standing challenge: In the September-October, 2003 issue of *The Remnant*, page 10, we offered a new Bible for the first person who would produce a verse of Scripture from the King James Version of the Bible that says, “The kingdom of heaven is within you.” We promised to buy that person a brand-new leather-bound Bible of his choice. We are still waiting. To date no one has taken us up on this most generous offer. This is simply because such a verse does not exist.

Now, on equally safe ground, we will broaden our offer to this:

We will buy a brand-new leather-bound Bible for the first person who will use any Greek dictionary or lexicon generally recognized as sound, scholarly, and authoritative, and, **from the Greek word translated “determined before” in Acts 4.28 (προωρισεν) and translated “predestinated” in Romans 8.29 and 8.30, exegetically prove that God did not gather Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel to DO whatsoever He had predestinated for them to DO.**

Specifically, using a recognized lexical Greek dictionary or textbook (such as Thayer’s *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Vincent’s *Word Studies in the New Testament*, Dana and Mantey’s *Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, or authors such as Strong, Trench, Wuest, and Tregelles, to name a few), we ask Mr. Hodges or anyone of his persuasion to prove that God did *not*

predestinate **the action(s)** of what Herod, Pilate, and the others did to the Lord Jesus Christ. If you wish to make the attempt but cannot handle the Greek New Testament at the lexical level, please do not waste your time and ours.

For nearly one hundred years the Limiteds have virtually gotten away with their parrot-like repetition of their catch-phrase, “God only predestinated people, not actions.” We are all tired of these Semi-Pelagians denying the truth that God predestinated the actions of men, including the most heinous of all crimes, that of killing the Lord Jesus Christ. In sum:

(1) If one of them will provide a worthy exegesis of Acts 4.28 in a nominal 2,000 words or so (this article is around 2,000 words), proving therein that God did **not** predestinate the actions of Herod, Pilate, and the others, I will get them their new Bible and drop the subject. And,

(2) if he so wishes, *The Remnant* will publish “the winner’s” article proving his position.

Until someone presents such proof, however, we suggest that, should the Lord be so gracious to them, the Limiteds should stop misrepresenting the Lord God Almighty. Without His grace, of course, they cannot and never will. Without His grace, we all would be at one with the family into which we were by Adam’s nature born—the family of Pelagianism, Arminianism, and their little sister Conditionalism.

—C. C. Morris

THE REDEEMED OF THE LORD

But to you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing under his wings; and they shall be mine, saith the Lord, in that day when I make up my jewels (Malachi 4:2; 3:17).

This is also another branch of wisdom; for Job saith, “where is wisdom to be found, and where is the place of understanding? It cannot be gotten from gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof; whence then cometh wisdom, and where is the place of understanding?” Seeing it is hid from all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air, it is evident that this wisdom which Job says is the fear of the Lord, (Job 28:28) is a rich treasure in the heart of a child of God, but hid from all others.—*Jesse Delves*

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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.