

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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EXHORTATION TO ADHERE TO THE WORD OF GOD

Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers. Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness (2 Timothy 2.14-16).

I.

In the text under consideration, the Apostle Paul instructs the minister Timothy to encourage preachers of Christ to closely adhere to the teachings of Jesus and the Apostles. They are to avoid useless trivial questions and points that serve no purpose other than to cause confusion and misunderstandings.

How sad it is to see brethren argue or dispute over things that have no significant impact upon a life of faith. Sadly this has become somewhat of a hobby for many Old School Primitive Baptists over the years, even to the detriment of fellowship and peace among the churches.

Important core issues have been laid aside in the pursuit of things that are better left alone. We might mention a few at this point:

1. The nature of the Trinity or Three In One God.
2. The origin of Satan.
3. The origin and nature of sin.
4. The presence of spiritual beings,

5. The existence, nature, and duration of hell.
6. The reality and nature of the resurrection from the dead of the just and unjust.
7. The second personal return of Christ to the earth.
8. The reality and nature of the final judgment.
9. The reality, nature, and duration of the reign of Christ on earth.
10. Will the saints recognize and know each other in the glorified state?
11. The substance and nature of the eternal union between Christ and the church.
12. The substance and nature of the new and heavenly birth.

There are other questions of this type, but these are sufficient to demonstrate the sort of issues upon which people like to dwell. Much trouble and division has arisen from such questions being elevated far too high and given greater attention than what is warranted. This comes from the carnal reasoning of man running rampant, and the rejection of the verbally inspired Word of God.

When frail sinful men come together to discuss the doctrines contained in Scripture, great generosity should be shown one to another. No bars of fellowship should be thrown up simply because some are of a different opinion than others. The Scriptures should be discussed in the spirit of Christian love and understanding.

If forty Christians were to be assembled in a room, and they were asked their opinion on any one of the above issues you might well receive forty different points of view and not any two be the same. Among

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human beings opinions are like belly buttons, everyone has one. Sadly, some of them stink. That's human nature. Ideas are accepted or rejected based upon a variety of personal experience and motivational factors. Very few are grounded upon the unshakeable foundation of the Word of God.

The inspired Scriptures have the first and last word on all matters of faith and practice. They should be the one and only rule for all Christians in all places and at all times. This old saying has served many a faithful saint in the past and would do many good today. "God said it, I believe it, and that settles it."

All that the children of God need to know is revealed in the Bible. Some questions that arise in the mind and imagination of believers cannot be found in the Scriptures because some things are not necessary for them to know.

Thanks be to God that what we cannot understand by searching we may faithfully bow to in humble submission. We trust that all knowledge and wisdom is in the possession of the Almighty Sovereign of the universe. This brings great comfort to the frail little children of grace.

The race of men is restless and inquisitive, but "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out (Romans 11.33)!"

By nature man is an ignorant proud rebel against God and His holiness. "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of

God, neither indeed can be (Romans 8.7).” The natural mind of man will not bow submissively to the will of God revealed in the written Word. The children of God are a compound people possessed of two natures.

That which is recorded in the Bible, and should be read and accepted as truth, is easily distorted by the natural sinful mind of man. To question the truth of Scripture and to seek to twist it in order to make it support ones own point of view is a symptom of the depravity of human nature. Such depravity results in carnal reasoning and vain philosophy.

“O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called (1 Timothy 6.20).”

The word *science* is properly translated as *knowledge*. Paul is saying to Timothy to avoid human philosophy and carnal reasoning in the interpretation of spiritual things.

Such vain discussions serve only to confuse those that are exposed to them and either are non-productive or counter productive to the cause of Christ. Issues such as these often cause division in the household of faith. When servants of Christ cease to nurture and build up the saints of God then they have become useless and are good for nothing. These are serious issues to which urgent attention should be given.

For far too long the opinions of man have been allowed to disrupt the clear and plain teachings of the Bible. The children of God must return to the reading and study of the Scriptures in order to avoid error and vain conjecture. “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them (Isaiah 8.20).”

II.

The Apostle Paul encourages Timothy to study the Scriptures to prepare himself for the task appointed to him. The motivation for such study was not to prove himself a great and eloquent preacher impressive to his hearers, but to seek the approval of his God. To sincerely serve the God of his salvation was the driving force impressed upon Timothy by Paul.

The children of God should have this same goal in mind. To worship God in Spirit and in Truth is to sincerely and genuinely worship, reverence, and serve

God with all our being. “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth (John 4.24).” “Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself (Matthew 22.37-39).”

True love and true service toward God must come from a spiritually sincere and genuinely honest heart. Only God can prepare such a heart as this for His service. Only the Holy Spirit can empower man to render spiritual service to God. This comes not from the natural man, but from the spiritual.

When Timothy was urged to continue in the study of the Word of God it was for the good of himself, the glory of God, and the spiritual welfare of the children of God. This same exhortation serves the present day ministers of Christ and the people of God in all times and all places. We should read and study our Bibles, but above all we should BELIEVE what those Bibles say!

To rightly divide the word of truth is to correctly understand the Holy Scriptures. Only a careful reading and searching of the Bible with a prayerful mind can do this. The Bible is a spiritual book written to the children of God with the intent that they might learn from it. “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope (Roman 15.4).”

If the Scriptures are given to us by the hand of God so that we might learn from them, acquire patience, receive comfort, and produce an earnest expectation of things to come (hope), then certainly the children of grace should read and believe in these inspired words. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness (2 Timothy 3.16).”

How dare anyone twist or corrupt the pure words of Scripture to serve their own ends? To create a doctrine that is not plainly revealed in Scripture is treading on dangerous ground indeed. One most surely will answer to God for such actions. If those actions are offensive to God’s little ones then certainly that man would be better off if he had never been born.

The word of truth must surely be distributed to the family of God in a pure and undefiled manner. The

minister is like the shepherd of a flock or the father of a family whose task it is to care for and feed his charges. He must properly see that food and supplies are divided out in correct order. The lambs or babes must receive food appropriate for their consumption and nourishment. Strong meat would not be right for them. For the sheep, or more mature ones, milk would not be sufficient to supply and meet their needs.

The food must be rightly divided or correctly distributed. The minister and those in positions of responsibility must study so they may care for God's children appropriately. The congregation should follow these pastors only as far as those pastors follow the instructions of Christ. "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ (1 Corinthians 11.1)."

When those spiritual teachers begin to chase after vain carnal reasoning and traditions of men then they must not be followed. The Scriptures must shape our thoughts and dictate our practices. These same Scriptures must not be distorted or clouded by seeking to make them support the notions and novel ideas of men.

The more familiar the children of grace are with the teachings of the Bible the more difficult it becomes to lead them astray from the sound doctrine of Christ and His Apostles. According to the Bible the saints are to search the Scriptures daily to learn of the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Since the Old School Primitive Baptists do not engage in Sunday Schools or Bible Study in any organized manner, this study *must* be carried out by the individuals and brethren in private. Likewise the children of Old School Baptists *should be* instructed at home by their parents. "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6.4)."

It must certainly be stressed at this point that no amount of home instruction will create a spiritual child of God from our children. We realize that this alone is the work of the Holy Spirit without any means which man can devise. It, however, is the duty and should be the sincere desire of all believers that their children should have a natural respect for the God who created them and gave them as a blessed gift to their mother and father.

It is also of great assistance to the children in learning the proper way of conducting themselves in the world. There should be no question that all can

learn from the Bible how they ought to behave themselves in a decent and honest manner. Evidently, this practice has become somewhat neglected among people in general and sadly some Old School Baptists are included in this statement. It was not always the case.

III.

We come now to the last of the three main points of which we wish to address. We have touched on the futility of publicly discussing, asserting, and arguing on issues and ideas that are at the very least new or novel. This means those things that are not explicitly expressed or implied in the Holy Scriptures should be handled with great care.

Secondly we addressed the instruction to study the Word of God so that the ministers of the gospel in addition to all other disciples of Christ may be obedient useful servants of the Most High God. The teachings of the Scriptures must be handled and distributed properly to the children of God that they might receive spiritual food in due season. The Bible contains all that is necessary for the saints to know in this life in regard to spiritual and decent conduct, and order of worship.

The perseverance in propagating doctrinal error, which can lead to perversions in Christian practice or heresy, is forbidden by the Word of God. To hold to some error personally and privately is something that all believers may be guilty of at one time or another, but to publicly assert this belief as truth and to lead others down the path of error and perversion is called heresy.

The best remedy for such behavior is a careful and prayerful study of the Word of God. Scripture will explain Scripture; thus, resources that aid in the *literal understanding of the words* of the Bible are of great importance and assistance.

Bible encyclopedias that give a greater understanding of the practices of ancient times can be of great help. To know that a phrase or practice in the Bible may have been common to the people of that place and time can give a far better understanding of the intention of the inspired writer. We begin to see the bigger picture more clearly.

These clearer understandings give the Christian a far greater appreciation of the lessons of Scripture. A more accurate view of the text of Holy Writ is a wonderful preventative to error and heresy.

It must be reiterated that these instructions belong to the believing spiritual children of God. “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him (Hebrews 11.6).” Divine illumination is required to correctly understand the Word of God.

Therefore, to avoid being led more and more into ungodly belief and practice the true believer must not listen to or engage in empty discussion or assertion based upon human conjecture and carnal reasoning. Honest forthright discussions and meditations upon the Word of God are to be encouraged, and frequently engaged in with sincere followers of the Lamb.

“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching (Hebrews 10.25).”

Prayerful meditation with a clear understanding of the literal meaning of the Scriptures may lead to a deeper more spiritual understanding of the great lessons taught in the Bible.

However, these meditations upon the Word must be kept within the bounds of Scripture and not given over to vain speculation.

A return to the simple basic reading and belief of the Bible is perhaps the best solution that can be thought of at the current time. In private or among the family praying, reading, and applying the things of God revealed in the Bible should be the earnest endeavor.

The public praying, singing, and preaching in the congregation of the Lord’s people is the simplest and best means of worship. An honest attempt at understanding what is revealed in Scripture while refraining from speculation upon what is not revealed in the Bible seems to be best way.

May the Lord grant us all the spirit of prayer and understanding of what He has recorded in His Word, and preserved down to this present time for His little children. May He grant that His children might return to the good old ways of reading and believing the Holy Scriptures of eternal truth. Nevertheless not our will, but His be done. Amen.

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THE PROPHETIC PRESENT AND THE PROPHETIC PAST

PART I: INTRODUCTORY

The eternal God is above and beyond time as we experience it; therefore Jesus, as Jehovah incarnate, could tell His enemies, “Before Abraham was [2000 BC], I AM (John 8.58),” applying the name of the Eternal God, I AM, to Himself. His enemies immediately recognized what He was saying and doing, because this is the name He used when speaking to Moses (about 1500 BC) from the burning bush:

“And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, **I AM THAT I AM**: and He said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, **I AM** hath sent me unto you (Exodus 3.13f).”

John’s account continues: “Then took they [the Pharisees] up stones to cast at Him: but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.” The Pharisees wanted to stone Christ because they considered His calling Himself by the divine name to be blasphemy.

God, being the eternal I AM, and for reasons sufficient to Himself having predestinated all things and events that ever have or ever will transpire, has, can, and does reveal to His prophets *some* of those events which are predestinated to happen.

Every event previously prophesied by one of God’s prophets, when it comes to pass in time, proves the predestination of that event. All fulfilled prophecy is proof of predestination.

It is evident the event was “fixed” from *at least* the time the prophet prophesied, but we may say that, since our God is unchangeable and there is no new thing with Him, there never was a time when the event—any event—was not settled in God’s mind and purpose. We say the event was eternally fixed. This eternal fixedness of all things is what is called predestination.

As timely creatures, we speak of future events with words such as *shall* and *will*. The eternal God, unbounded by time, speaks freely of future events as if they were already accomplished and done in time. “For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast (Psalm 33.9).” Thus He told Joshua, “Every place that the sole of *your foot shall tread* [future] upon, that *have I given* [past] unto you, as I said unto Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast (Joshua 1.3f).” (You will note that Israel’s God-given eastern boundary, yet to be realized, is not the Jordan, but the Euphrates River. This is a major reason for the hatred of the Arab world against the nation of Israel.)

A prophet speaks as if he were in the place of God; he speaks God’s words. If the prophet’s words are an expression in the future tense, it is a simple prophecy foretelling a future event, as we would expect from a prophecy. Such a prophecy tells us what shall come to pass at some future time. “Therefore the Lord himself **shall** give you a sign; Behold, a virgin **shall** conceive, and bear a son, and **shall** call his name Immanuel (Isaiah 7.14)” is such a prophecy that simply expresses something that will come to pass in the future.

In the last issue of *The Remnant*, in the article on Ezekiel 36-37, **Psalm 102** was mentioned. This text is important enough to warrant further comments, which I will now endeavor to furnish on the subject of the **prophetic present** and the **prophetic past**, and how this Psalm ties in with the prophecies of Ezekiel.

The **prophetic present** is the voice in which the prophet speaks when he is viewing a future event (perhaps hundreds or even thousands of years in the future) as though he is present when that event is actually happening.

David was not only a king; he was also a prophet. Many times his comments went beyond his own personal experiences, darkness of soul, and complaints about his bitter trials. When he wrote,

“I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture (Psalm 22.17f),”

he was moved beyond his present troubles and

lifted up above himself by the inspiration of God’s Holy Spirit to prophesy of the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. He did not say, “...they *will* look and stare...they *will* part my garments...they *will* cast lots...,” even though those events were yet around one thousand years in David’s future.

He wrote these words as the thoughts and words of Christ, as if at that very moment those sorrowful events were happening, not just to David in his extreme anguish of soul, but presently happening to our Lord and Savior.

Because this text speaks in the *present* tense of a recognizable *future* event, is an example of the **prophetic present** voice. I say “recognizable,” but the prophecy would be true whether or not man recognizes it.

Similarly, the **prophetic past** is the voice in which a prophet speaks when he is viewing a future event as if he is even further in the future than that event, and as though that event were already past. In the same Psalm David writes,

“For dogs have compassed [past tense] me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed [past tense] me: they pierced [past tense] my hands and my feet (Psalm 22.16).”

Because this verse speaks in the *past* tense of a *future* event, it is an example of the **prophetic past** voice.

This principle may be exemplified and illustrated in a passage of the Bible that is quite familiar to all who are acquainted with the Scriptures: Isaiah 53 speaks in the past and present tenses, even though the events were, at the time Isaiah wrote, yet future by about seven hundred years.

Isaiah wrote his prophecies over a century before Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel lived and wrote. Isaiah lived and wrote over seven hundred years before Christ was born. Even so he, as the other prophets, often spoke as though his prophecy was occurring in the present time or had already happened. He could do this with all authority and perfect accuracy because the same God who had predestinated those events to come to pass “in the fullness of time” was inspiring his words.

With these things in mind, consider a few details Isaiah prophesied of Christ around 700 BC:

1. THE PROPHETIC FUTURE

Isaiah wrote in the PROPHETIC FUTURE, which is as we would expect, since it should be self-evident that no prophecy, when it is given, is about an event that is already past; all prophecy generally pertains to future events. Isaiah specifically writes about Christ's birth, life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension when those events were all yet seven centuries into Isaiah's future:

A. For he *shall grow up* before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground.

B. When we *shall see* him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

C. Thou *shalt make* his soul an offering for sin.

D. He *shall see* His seed.

E. He *shall prolong* His days.

F. The pleasure of the LORD *shall prosper* in His hand.

G. He *shall see* of the travail of His soul.

H. [He] *shall be* satisfied.

I. by His knowledge my righteous servant *shall justify* many.

J. He *shall bear* their iniquities.

K. Therefore I *will divide* Him a portion with the great.

L. He *shall divide* the spoil with the strong.

"Shall" and "will" are expressions of **future** events.

2. THE PROPHETIC PRESENT

Isaiah wrote in the PROPHETIC PRESENT, as if he were present at the crucifixion, as if the events of Christ's life are happening "now" as far as Isaiah was concerned:

A. He *hath* no form nor comeliness;

B. He *is* despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief:

C. With His stripes we *are* healed.

D. He *is brought* as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers *is dumb*, so He *openeth* not his mouth.

The italicized words (*Hath (has), is, are, and openeth (opens) etc.*) in the above examples are expressions of **present** events.

3. THE PROPHETIC PAST

Isaiah wrote in the PROPHETIC PAST, *as though* the events of which he wrote had already transpired

at an earlier time, or, as we would say, as if they had occurred *before* the time he was viewing his prophecy:

A. We *hid* as it were our faces from Him.

B. He *was* despised.

C. We *esteemed* Him not.

D. Surely He *hath borne* our griefs, and *carried* our sorrows: yet *we did esteem* Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

E. He *was wounded* for our transgressions, He *was bruised* for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was upon Him*....

F. The LORD *hath laid* on him the iniquity of us all.

G. He *was oppressed*, and He *was afflicted*, yet He *opened* not His mouth.

H. He *was taken* from prison and from judgment.

I. He *was cut off* out of the land of the living.

J. For the transgression of my people He *was stricken*.

K. He *made* His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death;

L. He *had done* no violence, neither *was* any deceit in His mouth.

M. It *pleased* the LORD to bruise Him.

N. He *hath put* Him to grief.

O. He *hath poured* out His soul unto death.

P. He *was numbered* with the transgressors.

Q. He *bare* the sin of many.

R. [He] *made* intercession for the transgressors.

The italicized words (*hid, was, esteemed, etc.*) in the above examples are expressions of **past** events. They were not past when Isaiah wrote them, but they are now, and, because God from eternity declared these things to come to pass, they were "as good as done" before Isaiah's ink was dry.

This extended example from Isaiah 53 shows that a prophecy of a future event may be expressed as past, present, or future. To us, it might seem not to matter so much which form the prophet uses, but God's wording is always exact, perfect. Whether or not we understand why He used the past, present, or future, always remember this principle: **All fulfilled biblical prophecy is proof of God's absolute predestination of the events prophesied.**

This basic fact of prophetic language must be pointed out because some are entirely unaware of this principle. Being unaware even of the historical time

frame of when the prophecy was written and when it was fulfilled, and reading casually, they hastily conclude that if a prophecy is written in the present tense then it must be presently happening, either now or at the time the prophet was writing (or speaking); and if it is written in the past tense, they conclude, perhaps wrongly, that it is because the event has already occurred. They might thus even come to a correct conclusion, but for a wrong reason.

Using an earlier example, when such a one reads “they pierced my hands and my feet,” he (wrongly) concludes that the hands and feet of Jesus Christ were already pierced when David wrote those words around one thousand years before Jesus Christ was born.

What makes the matter worse is, if such a one is not willing to admit he has made an error in understanding this Scripture, and he does not know how else to justify such an error, and yet being willing to justify himself (cf. Luke 10.29), he may compound his error by saying something like, “*The Bible says Christ was ‘the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.’ So Christ’s hands and feet were pierced from the foundation of the world, even in David’s day.*” That is not only faulty logic; it is a horrible misapplication of a scriptural truth.

PART II: PSALM 102

We have made these extended remarks to introduce our comments on the text in Psalm 102.13-27. Beginning at verse 13, the text says,

Thou shalt arise [future], and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come [present]. For thy servants take [present] pleasure in her stones, and favour [present] the dust thereof (verses 13-14).

This prophecy, like Isaiah 53, is expressed in the future, the present, and the past. It is precisely for this reason we have gone into great detail about the prophetic future, present, and past voices.

One school of Bible “interpretation” tries to make every reference to Zion or Mount Zion to mean the church. First, may we say: **There may be many applications of a Scripture text, but there is only one correct interpretation.**

For example, many things written about Zion or Jerusalem may be applied to the church, and many parallels may be drawn, but the bottom line is this: Zion means Zion, and Jerusalem means Jerusalem, **the City of the great king**. “Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, **the city of the great King.**”

If that is to be applied only “spiritually” to “the church,” someone should tell us what the church’s *spiritual north side* is. (No doubt some would readily make the attempt, but they would be harder pressed to tell us how the church is “the joy of the whole earth.”) “But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God’s throne: Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by **Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.**” (Psalm 48.2; Matthew 5.34f). We also see by comparing the texts that Zion IS Jerusalem. Jerusalem is built, in part, on Mount Zion, a prominence in the hills of Judea in the land of Israel, on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea, the focal point of much of today’s news.

If Zion were the church, and Zion is neither more nor less than the church, then the one who says so should also tell us what Zion’s *stones* are, and what her *dust* is, in this text.

Some, ever desiring to make any and every text symbolical and figurative, might say the stones represent the children of God. Their proof text might be: “Ye also, **as lively stones**, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2.5).”

And they might say the dust also represents the fleshly bodies of the children of God. Their proof text might be: “For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that **we are dust** (Psalm 103.14).” Well and good, if this text is indeed to be taken figuratively. We might point out, however, that the Hebrew word for “dust” here, in Psalm 103.14, is twice translated as **rubbish**:

A. in Nehemiah 4.2: “But it came to pass, that when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews. And he spake before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive **the stones** out of the heaps of the **rubbish** which are burned?” and,

B. in Nehemiah 4.10: “And Judah said, The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there

is much **rubbish**; so that we are not able to build the wall.”

We see from Nehemiah, then, that the stones and dust/rubbish were not symbolic, figurative, or “spiritual” stones and dust. They were the literal heaps of ruins, rubble, stones, and dust, the demolition remains left after Nebuchadnezzar’s army had destroyed Jerusalem. It is in this sense the psalmist uses these terms in Psalm 102.14.

Since the text is to be taken literally, that Jerusalem would be reduced to a pile of stones, dust, and rubble, then this text is a double reference: first, to the destruction of Jerusalem—also known as Zion—and second, a prophecy of the time when Zion/Jerusalem will be rebuilt.

Objection: Jerusalem was rebuilt in Ezra’s and Nehemiah’s time.

Reply: It was indeed rebuilt, but the Psalm has not yet had the complete fulfillment of which the rest of this Psalm prophesied (verses 13-22). This is not merely speaking of the rebuilding of Jerusalem in the times of Ezra and Nehemiah, as the rest of the psalm brings out, beginning with the next verse: *So the heathen shall fear the name of the LORD, and all the kings of the earth thy glory* (verse 15).

The term *heathen* is not merely tribes of near-naked savages leaping around in loincloths, waving spears, and sacrificing missionaries to idols. This word *heathen* is a translation of the Hebrew word *gowy* (rhymes with *boy*), which in the King James Version (KJV) Bible is translated into any one of the four English words *Gentile*, *heathen*, *nation*, and *people*. These four words, when translated from *gowy*, are completely interchangeable in your KJV Bible (there are other Hebrew words that are also translated as *nations* and *people*).

There are certainly the savage heathen as mentioned above, but this term *heathen* is far broader. *Gowy* (“goy”) is the Hebrew term for any foreign **nation**, hence **Gentiles** at large (See Strong’s Concordance or any good Bible dictionary). The nations of the world, Israel alone excepted, being Gentile nations, are **heathen** nations. The European nations, the nations of Asia, Africa, the peoples on the islands of the seas, the peoples of the western hemisphere, the USA included, are by definition *heathen* nations.

What we have in this verse, then, is a plain prophetic statement that the time is coming when the

NATIONS shall fear the name of the LORD, and **all the kings of the earth** [shall fear] the Lord’s glory.

We do well to ask ourselves: Do the nations of this earth fear the name of the LORD now? No. Does any nation of this earth, as a nation, fear the name of the Lord now? No. Do **all the kings of the earth** fear the Lord’s glory? Of course not. Have they ever? No. We yet live in the vast period of time when “...the **heathen** rage, and the **people** imagine a vain thing... **The kings of the earth** set themselves, and the **rulers** take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us (Psalm 2.1ff).” This attitude is nowhere more evident than in the country in which we live, in which worldly politics, worldly religions, and society as a whole are daily combining their efforts to destroy even nominal “Christianity.”

Since **all** nations and **all** kings have **never** feared the Lord in the past, and they do not in the present, the Psalmist David, *being a prophet* (Acts 2.29f), was speaking in the PROPHETIC FUTURE of a time obviously yet future, not only for himself, but future even for us in this present evil age, when all nations and kings will be brought into subservience to Jesus the Lord by His rod of iron.

16 When the LORD shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory.

This verse tells when Zion and the nations of the earth will be converted, and that by the force of the Lion of the tribe of Judah, Jesus Christ the Lord. It will be at the one and the same time Christ the King appears in His glory at His second advent.

Objection: He has already entered into His glory. He is reigning spiritually now.

Reply: 1. He has not yet **appeared** in His glory. “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory (Colossians 3.4).” That obviously has not happened yet.

2. Of course He is reigning spiritually now, and providentially, in all the affairs of nature and grace, and in the course of the peoples and nations of this world. But His reigning spiritually and providentially is not the same as His bringing His enemies into complete submission unto Himself. The wicked of this world could not care less about Christ’s predestination, providence, and His “ruling spiritually,” as long as they think themselves free to pursue their idolatry, lusts, drunkenness, witchcraft, whoredom, and money.

3. On the other hand, Christ said of Himself, “Ought not Christ to have **suffered** these things, and to enter into **His glory**?” (Luke 24.26). The Scriptures make it plain that there are two aspects of Christ’s relationship with His creation: (a) **His sufferings** and (b) **His glory**. These are associated respectively with His first coming and His second coming. Peter also alludes to this in 1 Peter 1.7-13:

...that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom [i.e., unto the prophets] it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into. Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ....

We have here quoted a lengthy passage from Peter’s writings because the context makes all the clearer what he is saying:

A. The prophets prophesied of two major aspects of Christ’s work—(1) His sufferings, and (2) His glory that should follow.

B. The prophets did not specify how soon after or how far in the future His glory would follow His sufferings. Neither did Peter.

C. The prophets did not fully understand what the Holy Spirit was signifying in their writings, but they realized the Spirit had inspired these truths in their writings; hence,

D. The prophets searched their own writings (as any preacher should search the prophets’ writings) for a clearer understanding of these two phases of Christ’s work (His sufferings and His glory), hoping to be blessed to more clearly discern, or to tell them apart.

E. The prophets understood they were not writing for themselves or their own generation so much as for a future generation, “unto us...,” that is, unto the same ones to whom Peter wrote. (See the comments on **generation** and on verse 18, below.)

Peter bids “us” to do three things, the third being to **hope** to the end **for the grace** that is to be **brought** unto you **at the revelation of Jesus Christ**.

It remains for John to tell exactly what “the **revelation** of Jesus Christ” involves. John does so in detail in all of the book of Revelation.

Not to digress further, there are these two major aspects of Christ’s work: (1) His sufferings to redeem His people from their sins by His shed blood, His death, and His vicarious atonement, all in the behalf of His elect. This, He announced on the cross, was finished. “It is finished (John 19.30)”; and,

(2) the revelation of His glory. The first, His sufferings, was accomplished at His first coming. The second—His glory: It is true that His people now see His glory by faith, but that glory will be *fully* manifested, even to His enemies, only at His second coming in glory.

Objection: He said, “It is finished.” Therefore He has nothing else to do at His second coming.

Reply: This kind of objection expresses an unfamiliarity with the Scriptures, to say the least. “I will **come** again, and **receive** you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also (John 14.3).” “He will **judge** the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained (Acts 17.31).” These and many other things Christ has yet before Him. His announcing “It is finished” only had to do with the work His Father had given Him to do at His first coming; namely, His giving His life as a ransom for many, and His saving His people from their sins. To try to build on this text (John 19.30) and say He *has nothing else to do at His second coming* ignores a multitude of Scriptures that tell what He will do when He returns to this earth.

Objection: He is glorified now.

Reply: He is now glorified with His *eternal* glory which He had with the Father before the world was:

“And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was (John 17.5).” This is His intrinsic glory that is His as the eternal **God the Son** and the **Son of God**. However, He has yet to receive the glory due Him as the Son of David and the Son of Man, the God-Man, “the man Christ Jesus.” “But this **man**, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth **expecting till** His enemies be made His footstool (Hebrews 10.12f).” His enemies, then, are yet to be made His footstool. Some say, for a reason they have not yet given, that Christ will never make use of His footstool. You use your footstool, and I use mine; shall not the Lord of glory use His?

No one has yet seen the wrath of the Lamb. This has never yet been done in a manifest way, and it is therefore yet future. “**When** the Son of man shall come in His **glory**, and all the holy angels with Him, **then** shall He sit upon the throne of **His glory** (Matthew 25.31).” The throne of His glory is the throne of David, something entirely different from His presently sitting upon His Father’s throne, **expecting till** His enemies be made His footstool.

“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and **give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come**: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters (Revelation 14.6-7).” John indicates **Christ’s glory** is to be associated with **the hour of His judgment**. Since “the Judgment Day” is yet future and has not yet materialized, it follows that Christ has not yet come in **His own glory** as Son of David, King of kings, and Lord of Lords.

Another proof that Christ has not entered into the glory which is rightfully His as **the King of kings** is that His people have not yet been made experimental partakers of His glory; they obviously have not yet been glorified. By “experimental partakers” I mean they have not yet *experienced* the glorification to which they are predestinated (Romans 8.29-30). “Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” “Them He

also glorified” is *the prophetic past*; it is spoken of as past although it is yet future as far as we who are yet living on earth are concerned. But by the saints’ being predestinated to glorification in Christ, it is as good as done, and it is so spoken of in Romans 8.

REIGN WITH...

The apostle Paul, speaking in irony to the carnal Corinthians (1 Corinthians 4.8), says,

“Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: and *I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you,*”

indicating that if they were truly reigning in the biblically prophetic sense, they would be truly glorified and truly reigning with the Lord Jesus Christ instead of fighting among themselves; and he, Paul, would be reigning with them. “It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with Him, we shall [future] also live with Him: if we suffer, **we shall also reign [future] with Him**: if we deny Him, He also will deny us: if we believe not, yet He abideth faithful: He cannot deny Himself (2 Timothy 2.11ff).”

“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and **shall reign with Him** a thousand years (Revelation 20.6).”

The Corinthian brethren had reigned *as* kings (behaving *as if* they were kings); that is, they were lording themselves over each other in their fleshly divisions and judgments (1.10), even judging Paul (4.3-5); in their contentions (1.11), their sectarianism (1.12), their earthly philosophical “wisdom” for which they, as Greeks, were noted (chapters 1-2; 3.18-20), when in reality they were only carnal babes in Christ (3.1-4).

The Corinthian brethren were glorying in men (4.6-7), and were not yet partakers of the display of the glory of Christ in them that will follow at, and after, the resurrection of the saints. It was this state of affairs that set the tone for Paul to say, “I would to God ye did [truly] reign, that we also might reign with you.” When Christ reigns on earth, all His people will reign on earth with Him. The heavenly throng “sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast

redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and **we shall reign on the earth** (Revelation 5.9f).”

Objection: A literal understanding of that text is carnal.

Reply: Some confuse *literal* with *carnal*, but no error could be farther from the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. *Carnal* is contrasted to *spiritual*, not to *literal*. Spiritual truths are literal truths, because all truth, at some level, is spiritual truth. Christ was literally born of a virgin, but nothing could have been more spiritual: “That which is conceived in her [Mary] is **of the Holy Spirit** (Matthew 1.20).” Christ literally, physically, offered Himself in behalf of His elect as a sacrifice to His Father, but He “through **the eternal Spirit** offered himself without spot to God (Hebrews 9.14).” Jesus was literally, physically, raised from the dead, but it was by “...**the Spirit of Him** that raised up Jesus from the dead...(Romans 8.11).” These examples, which could be multiplied without end, should suffice to illustrate *spiritual truth is literal truth*, and *vice versa*. Never suggest, and never entertain the notion, that because something happens literally and physically it is automatically “carnal.”

Nor will the reign of Christ and His people be some nebulous, invisible make-believe that only exists in the secret meditations of God’s humble poor. The truth yet to be realized is, “And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should **smite the nations**: and **He shall rule them with a rod of iron**: and He treadeth the winepress of the **fierceness and wrath** of Almighty God. And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, **KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS** (Revelation 19.15f).”

“But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me (Luke 19.27).” *That is really reigning!*

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, **and** the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited. Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients **gloriously** (Isaiah 24.21ff).”

His saints, ruling with Him over the nations of the earth, will literally (not figuratively or symbolically) participate fully with Him in His glorious reign:

“Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a twoedged sword in their hand; to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the LORD (Psalm 149.5-9).”

“And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over **the nations**: and he [that overcometh] shall rule them [the nations] with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they [the nations] be broken to shivers: **even as I** [Jesus—Revelation 22.16] received of my Father (Revelation 2.26f).”

None of this has ever happened yet. In fact, the saints are presently forbidden to seek vengeance, because vengeance is the Lord’s prerogative alone. “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord (Romans 12.19).”

It is true that God’s children may cry out to Him, as the poor widow cried out to the unjust judge in Luke 18: “There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: and there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, **Avenge me of mine adversary**... And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that **he will avenge them speedily**. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth (verses 3-8)?”

This has never happened yet, even figuratively; but, as it is prophesied, so it will take place at Christ’s second advent and following it (Revelation 5.9-10, 20.4).

Ruling over the nations is not “carnal,” although shallow men might entertain carnal imaginations about it. Ruling over the nations is part of the saints’ heritage of reigning with Christ, over the heathen/nations/people/Gentiles as they are brought into subjection to the King of kings and Lord of lords. He will subdue

His enemies in a manifest or visible way, so that “at the name of **Jesus** every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in [on] earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that **Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father** (Philippians 2.10).” This has never happened yet, nor will it, until His return to claim the **honor and glory** rightly due Him.

He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer:

Of course, this and many other prophecies of the future glory of Christ and His saints certainly can be *applied* to His people in any age, including its being applied to His church, now. No one has said otherwise; but it will yet be applied literally, totally, and completely, when “unto them that look for Him **shall He appear the second time** without sin unto salvation (Hebrews 9.28).” The fullness of Jacob’s prophecy, “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),” will be realized only at Christ’s second coming. Remember; **there may be many applications of a text, but there is only one correct interpretation of a text within its context and within the context of what the Bible, as a whole, says about the subject.**

18 This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the LORD.

Note: It is not generations, plural. It is the *generation*. “The generation to come” and “the people which shall be created” are one and the same. “A seed shall serve Him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a **generation**. **They** shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto **a people that shall be born**, that He hath done this (Psalm 22.30f).” The family of God has only one Father, and this being so, Christ said: “But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and **all ye are brethren**. [then the term “church fathers” is unscriptural—CCM] And call no man your father upon the earth: for **one is your Father**, which is in heaven (Matthew 23.8f).”

“But ye are **a chosen generation**, a royal [*politics*] priesthood [*religion*], an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous

light: which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy (1 Peter 2.9f).” This generation, having one Father, makes them brethren with the saints of every age, brethren of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Peter, Paul, and of each other. This holy nation is the only nation that ever has or ever will combine “religion and politics” correctly, through the Lord Jesus Christ as the Prophet, Priest, and King.

19 For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the LORD behold the earth;—to hear what? To do what? The next few verses answers these questions.

20 To hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death: Had this already been fulfilled completely, there would have been no martyrs. Paul (to name no other; and all the apostles, with the sole exception of John, died martyrs’ deaths) would not have suffered and died in the cause of Christ. “Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace; and labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day. I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you (1 Corinthians 4.11-14).”

There will be even yet to come, martyrs for the cause of Christ “before that great and notable day of the Lord come”:

“Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake (Matthew 24.9).”

“And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled (Revelation 6.9ff).”

21 To declare the name of the LORD in Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem;

Now, both His name and His praise are being declared throughout all the earth through the gospel of grace, there is no doubt; but none see it or understand it except His elect, and that is only by His infinite love, power, and irresistible grace. For the most part, those in Jerusalem and in Israel today are yet blinded to these truths, but that blindness has a time limit placed on it by God Himself. The time is coming when that blindness will be removed. “For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness **in part** is happened to Israel, **until** the fulness of the Gentiles be come in (Romans 11.25).”

It should be obvious from this text that Israel does not mean the church, because the church, the body of believers, the children of God in this present evil age, are the very ones who have had the blindness of nature removed from them. According to this text, Paul’s concern was that **brethren** within the church at Rome would not be **ignorant**, resulting in their being **wise in their own conceits** (as were the Corinthians!). Blindness in part has happened to (national) Israel, not to the church, and that blindness is only **until** the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. Then Jehovah their God will remove the blindness from national Israel.

By the same token, we are given to know that the fullness of the Gentiles has not yet been completely brought in, because blindness, as pertaining to their Messiah Jesus the Lord, persists in national Israel. The two—God’s bringing in the fullness of the Gentiles and His subsequently (or simultaneously) removing the blindness from national Israel—go together.

22 When the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the LORD. This has never happened yet, that “the **people** and the **kingdoms** are, or ever have been, gathered together **to serve the Lord**; they were **gathered together** (God did the gathering) *to serve His predestinated purpose* in the crucifixion of the Lord, but that is quite another matter from their being gathered together to *serve* Him. Nor will they ever be so gathered, to serve Him, until His return, when He smites the nations with an iron rod, bringing all the world into true subjection to Himself.

23 He weakened my strength in the way; he shortened my days. 24 I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days: thy years are throughout all generations.

This is the prophetic past, spoken as if by Christ Jesus in His final hours before and during His crucifixion. His days were “shortened,” by man’s understanding, as He was crucified as a young man in his early thirties. He was “taken away in the midst of” His days only in the *human* sense that He was crucified not quite halfway to (in the midst or middle of) the “threescore and ten” spoken of in the Scriptures. From the divine standpoint He could say with Job, “All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.” We know verses 23-24 are a prophecy of Him from verses 25-27, which immediately follow:

25 Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. 26 They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: 27 But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.

These verses are quoted and positively applied to Christ in Hebrews 1.10-12: “And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.”

Does the thought of Christ’s ruling on this earth for a thousand years make you nervous? Does reading this passage about Christ’s deity and His suffering make you more comfortable, as you find it more familiar? It might occur to someone to ask: Just why is this abrupt change in Psalm 102 introduced in verse 23? If the *glory* of Christ’s millennial kingdom is set forth in Psalm 102, why then would this psalm end with an extended view of the *sufferings* of Christ and His being cut off in the midst of His days, rather than closing this psalm on a higher note of His successful triumph?

It is because the future **glory** of Christ, which we have been discussing, is intimately linked with the **sufferings** of Jesus. They cannot be separated, the one from the other. It is because His glory is ever rooted in His sufferings. As God the Son and the Son of God, the Lord Christ has eternal glory shared equally with the Father and the Holy Spirit. But as the Son of man, the son of David, the son of Abraham, the Second Adam, the mediator-man Christ Jesus, His glory as

King of kings and Lord of lords is forever associated with His sufferings to redeem His people from their sins and to remove the curse which God put on the earth in Genesis 3.17-19. By the time He has fulfilled His predestinated purpose, all things associated with sin, death, and the curse, will also have served God's purpose for their being here. Then, when that has come to pass, having served the purpose of their existence, **there will be no more death and no more curse.**

“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 (Revelation 21.4).”

Now, we ache and are in pain because of sin's presence. But never make the Conditionalists' mistake that the disciples made in John 9:

And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, “Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?”

Don't ever think that because some poor saint is blind, or crippled, or has cancer, or loses his or her memory to Alzheimer's disease, that it is a specific judgment upon them for some secret sin. This was the error of Job's three companions as well as that of the twelve disciples on this occasion.

Jesus answered, “Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.”

That is, the man was born blind not because of a specific sin of his parents or of himself, but to serve a higher purpose than we might understand: that the works of God should be made manifest in him. “For

this purpose **the Son of God was manifested**, that he might **destroy the works of the devil** (1 John 3.8).”

We mourn and shed tears because of sin. We sweat, we sorrow, we sigh, we cry, we die because of sin. When sin is finally destroyed and removed, then the curse that was placed on the ground for man's sake will be removed. “And there shall be **no more curse**: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and **they shall reign** for ever and ever (Revelation 22.3ff).”

In our present fallen condition, even though the saints have their minds renewed by His Spirit, we can scarcely fathom what that glorious world will be like. “But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him (1 Corinthians 2.9).” If it ended there, we would know nothing of the glories in the eternal ages to come.

But Paul continues in verse 10: “But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.” For now, while we are confined to this low ground, we must say, “Nevertheless we, **according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.**”

What applies to Psalm 102 applies to any prophecy; namely, just because a prophecy speaks of a thing in a way that sounds as if it was done in the past, or as if it is presently being done, this does not mean it in fact has already been (or is being) accomplished in time. To see what a text means, we must be blessed to compare spiritual things with spiritual (as said in 1 Corinthians 2.13), Scripture with Scripture, only in the light and guidance of the Scriptures' Author, the Holy Spirit. A prophecy's time of fulfillment, though spoken of as present or as already past, may yet await its fulfillment in the future. From man's viewpoint, countless events are yet in our future. From God's viewpoint, “...the works were finished from the foundation of the world (Hebrews 4.3).”

May God grant to all of His people the desire to search His word, and may He give us the discernment needed to rightly divide and understand it.

—C. C. Morris

CHALLENGES REPEATED

CHALLENGE #1: THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

We will buy a brand-new leather-bound Bible for the first person who will produce the often-referred to, but non-existent text, “**The kingdom of heaven is within you.**” There is, of course, no such text in the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible.

In the September-October, 2003 issue of *The Remnant*, page 10, I promised a brand-new leather-bound Bible of his choice to 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.” It has been over two years since I made that commitment, and I am still waiting. To date no one has taken me up on this most generous offer. This is simply because such a verse does not exist.

Getting those people who perpetuate this error to admit their text does not exist, however, is harder than pulling a bull alligator’s jaw teeth.

The point I am making is simple: There is a major difference between *the kingdom of heaven* and *the kingdom of God*. The difference between *the kingdom of heaven* and *the kingdom of God* is easy enough to point out, which I will do, again, below.

The difference between the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God is one that has not been written about very often because many (if not most) writers who approach the “kingdom” subject do so assuming the two kingdoms are one and the same. They are not, any more than *you* are the *building* you live in.

Those who believe the Bible was verbally inspired by God’s Holy Spirit (and I am one of them) believe that He has all language at His sovereign disposal, and that He used the exact words He intended. He said what He meant and meant what He said. He did not use the two terms will-he nil-he, randomly, like we suppose someone might casually pick and swap one word for another, synonyms, on a whim, on a fancy, on the spur of the moment, merely for variety’s sake.

The kingdom of God is not a synonym for the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven does not equal the kingdom of God. There is a difference between the two kingdoms as sure as there is a difference between **God** the Creator and the place called **heaven**, which is the Creator God’s abode. There is a difference between a man and the house in which he dwells. One is a person, the other is a place.

It is just as true in understanding the unseen world; Jehovah Elohim is our God whom we worship, and heaven, the heaven of heavens that Paul called “the third heaven” and into which he was caught up (2 Corinthians 12.2), is, as I understand it, His abode, the dwelling place of the Most High God.

Nor can anyone rightly conclude that because God is pleased to say He lives in a place called heaven, this means that He only has one kingdom that He sometimes calls the kingdom of God and sometimes calls the kingdom of heaven. Men with minimal intelligence do not confuse themselves with their home address. How much less would God do so?

I. The Kingdom of God

According to Jesus Himself, *the kingdom of God* consists of only those who are born of God’s Spirit: “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).” “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 3.5).” That defines the rule that tells us who can see and enter the kingdom of God, and the exception to the rule.

The basic rule is that men, through their depravity, are blind, willful, contrary, and at enmity against God. “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be (Romans 8.7).” As such, all men by nature are plagued with a twofold depravity:

(a) They *cannot* come to Christ (“**No man can come to me**, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.”—John 6.44); and

(b) they *will not* come to Christ (“**And ye will not come to me**, that ye might have life.”—John 5.40).

The rules (and the exceptions to the rules) of *the kingdom of God* are simple enough, spelled out in one- and two-syllable words by the Lord Jesus Christ:

Rule 1: "...he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Exception: The man born from above can see the kingdom of God.

Rule 2: "...he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

Exception: The one who is born of water and of the Spirit enters into the kingdom of God.

Rule 3: No man can come to Christ.

Exception: No one can come to Christ *except* the Father (which hath sent the Lord Jesus Christ) draws him to Christ. When so drawn by the Father, the man will come to Christ. He has no choice but to come.

II. The Kingdom of Heaven

The kingdom of heaven consists of the entire created universe, including everybody and everything in it. This is the universal domain over which God rules by His providence. It consists of angels, men, and demons; "the good" and "the bad," all creation, material and immaterial, animate and inanimate, animal, vegetable, mineral, spiritual, atoms and galaxies, the visible and invisible heavens, and whatever else exists. Just exactly as the Psalmist hath said, "The LORD hath prepared his throne in the **heavens**; and **his kingdom** ruleth over **all** (Psalm 103.19)." Over all; in this case, there is no exception. That is the Lord's heavenly kingdom or the kingdom of heaven.

CHALLENGE #2: PREDESTINATION OF MEN'S ACTIONS

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) (being the exact same word that is 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, we ask anyone of the "limited" persuasion (i.e., those who claim that predestination is limited to *people only*, and who claim the *acts* of people are not predestinated) to prove their position that God did *not* predestinate **the actions** of Herod, Pontius

Pilate, the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, which the apostles, in their prayer, said He did.

Use any 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, or Tregelles, to name a few) generally recognized as scholarly and sound.

I do not intend to rehash these subjects in every issue of *The Remnant*. If the Lord so wills, I hope to print a brief reminder of these challenges from time to time. Those men who without scriptural warrant say, "The kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven are the same thing, and they both mean the church," should know that we are serious. The same goes for those willfully contrary men who say that "God did not predestinate the actions of men. We ask them to either meet our challenges or quit propagating their errors.

I might have offered something other than a new Bible to anyone meeting either of our challenges. Perhaps I should have, as with each passing year it is becoming increasingly evident that those who say

(1) the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven are the same thing; and,

(2) the acts of men are not predestinated

are not using the Bibles they already have.

Contrary to what some may believe about it, I take no particular pleasure in issuing these challenges. I publish them for one reason only, which is this: I deplore the practice of anyone's deliberately perpetuating an error in the name of religion; the more so when it is done in the name of the *Primitive Baptists*, whom I trust I love. I wish to expose the duplicity of those who glibly continue to spread these errors. So far, they are proving by their silence that this attempt is working.

Error as a result of lightly mishandling the Scriptures is unspeakably bad, but for men to continue for a lifetime in baseless error, knowingly misrepresenting a Bible subject merely because all their friends have always said the same thing about it, even though what is being said is blatantly unscriptural—this is a shame and a disgrace. It is certainly too grievous to let it slide unnoticed.

—Editor

A CHILD OF GOD IS TAUGHT...

...that victory is out of himself [*i.e.*, outside of the child of God—Ed.]—in his Eternal Head, the co-equal, co-eternal Son of God.

Another thing teaches the child of God. It may be very strong food for some who hear me, but it is true food. Sin teaches the child of God. Sin taught the Psalmist, and he was humbled under it; and, grieved and sorry for his sin, he penned the 51st Psalm and the 32nd Psalm.

Sin in Peter taught him how to be ashamed of himself, and to go out and weep bitterly. But this does not hold out the least handle to sin—mind that? For “how shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”

—J. J. West, *This People*

FREE SERMON TAPES OF ELDER J. F. POOLE AVAILABLE

The e-mail message below, from Dr. T. W. Jackson, is self-explanatory. We do hope our readers will avail themselves of his kindness in making these sermon tapes of Elder Poole, first Editor and Publisher of *The Remnant*, available to interested readers. Dr. Jackson writes:

I have numerous messages of Elder James F. Poole on 90 minute audio tapes. I will be glad to send these to any that would desire to have and listen to them. There will never be any charge for these.

I am sorry that I do not have these tapes listed by Title. I only have the Bible verses that he speaks on. These date back from the late 1970s until the present. Anyone who would like just a few, I can send, and if they desire more, I will then be delighted to send them more to keep at NO COST.

Best wishes in hope,

Thomas W. Jackson
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A STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

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.