

# 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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## EDUCATED MINISTRY

By Elder P. D. Gold

**F**or some cause it seems to be the general opinion of people at large that we, the Primitive or Old School Baptist people, and as the church collectively, do not believe in, advocate, or endorse the education of our people, especially our preachers.

That we oppose the education of the academic world for any people anywhere of literature, the arts and sciences, so common among and profitable to mankind, is no where declared in any of our rules of decorum, articles of faith, church covenants, periodicals, history, or books of record, belonging to, or proceeding forth from us, either as individuals, associations or churches, neither is it declared from our pulpits by our ministers.

We hold that an education is a natural blessing to him who possesses it, and properly applies it, and not only to him, but to all with whom he comes in contact; but, if it is improperly used, like any other things so used, it becomes a curse to him, and to some extent to all who are affected by it. An educated man of finest purpose of heart is a blessing to any community, and should be sought after for the enchantment and well-being of the public good, but, on the other hand, an educated swindler, thief or robber, of which there are many around us, is a living machine for the destruction of the prosperity, peace and happiness of the people, unless apprehended and restrained.

Education does not give a man better faculties, nor does it add to them which he already has, but simply arouses, draws out, enlarges and strengthens them, thus fitting him for greater usefulness in the sphere designed for the operation of such faculties. It does not make a wise man of a fool, but does sometime seem to make a fool of a wise man. “Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him.” (Proverbs 26:12).

When we are charged with holding that the education of the natural mind is not essential to the effectual workings of the spirit of God in quickening and revealing in the heart of man the power and sufficiency of the Spirit and Grace of God in forgiving sins and imparting to the sinner the evidence of Salvation, *the charge is correct!*

We do not object to our ministers being educated, yet we do not admit that a literary education is indispensably necessary to enable one to understand the direct teaching of the Holy Ghost in Christian experience, and the dispensation of the gospel which the Lord commits and imparts unto those whom He calls and sends to preach the gospel. This dispensation, while necessary and essential to the true, full understanding of the way of life and Salvation and the proclamation thereof, is, itself, the true education of the gospel God-called minister, and is imparted to whom and when it is committed. “I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, *but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*” (Galatians 1:12). Now, Paul, are you certain about this matter? Did you not first go into Arabia and attend a theological school about this matter and learn

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this truth there for three years? Hear Paul's answer: "But, when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His Grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem." (Galatians 1:15-18). That Paul might preach the Son of God among the heathen, God revealed His SON *IN HIM* (not to him) (there is a big difference in the meaning of the prepositions "in" & "to"), hence the saying must be true, "I received it not of man, neither was I taught it, *but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*" Had it been revealed to Paul's old man, Saul of Tarsus, he might would have had whereof to glory, but not before God!

Paul did not confer with the flesh and blood of any man, nor did he consult and advise with the apostles; in fact, he did not see any of them for three years after that, and then only saw Peter and James, the Lord's natural brother, when he first went to Jerusalem.

Any one of ordinary intelligence and a little education can preach. But, however much intelligence and education one may have, he cannot preach the glorious gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ except a dispensation of it is imparted and committed unto him, nor can he in any sense know aught of the power of God *unless Christ is revealed in him the hope of glory.*

The dispensation of the Gospel is the understanding and knowledge of the power and operation of the Spirit of God in the revelation of Christ Jesus, the anointed, who is the Salvation, the hope and confidence of the people of God with the evidences of these things revealed. Also included in this great dispensation is how those who are truly manifested as His people are led by the Spirit, with the Gospel order of the Church that embraces the rules, regulations, duties and privileges of the church and of each member thereof.

If one is called of God to work of the ministry, the Spirit of God will fully teach him in that call to know of those spiritual Heavenly, Divine things of the Living God. There will be an inward irresistible burden and accompanying desire in his heart to lend his attention to the scriptures with meditation upon them, while giving attention in reading them, meditating upon the things of the dispensation of the gospel which is committed unto him. In being so blest, the full proof of the ministry will be made manifest in him of his ministry, while showing himself a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. That which was predeterminedly designed and purposed in his ministry will be accomplished, whether he is educated or not.

If a young man should join the church and give evidence of a gift to exercise in a public manner, and his preaching should seem to be acceptable to the churches, and he should be desirous of obtaining a better education that he might know more of the natural world in which he lives, and that he might be able to express himself in language more agreeable to himself, and should attend some good school for the simple purpose of obtaining a personal education, I have no idea that there is a church in our fellowship which would set up the slightest objection to him in his effort to improve his *natural* ability to express himself, but if he should claim that he must obtain this education as a further or more complete preparation for the work of the ministry, and that he could not sufficiently understand the scriptures without a knowledge of the dead languages and so forth, there is not a Primitive Baptist in all the land that would further hold his call in confidence, if they did not lose entire gospel fellowship for him.

There is to our understanding all possible difference between an educated ministry and an uneducated ministry. The term *ministry*, to my mind, has a far

deeper signification, as used in the scriptures in early Biblical times, than is commonly used today. It means more than just the ministers of the gospel, as a body, or that which they do, commonly called "the work of the ministry." Such scriptural expressions as, "seeing we have this ministry", "putting me into the ministry", "take heed to the ministry thou hast received", "Watch thou, make full proof of thy ministry", and "now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry", seems to me to set forth the fact that there is something about it which only the Lord bestows, into which He puts His ministers, which cannot be done by man in either respect.

The functions of the gospel ministry are the effect of that God-given unction which is done of Him who calls and sends whom He will to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, and thus feed the flock of God over which the Holy Ghost makes them overseers. Paul in enumerating the powers and virtues of the gifts in the ministry declares them to be all of the *Spirit*, and that they are given by the *Spirit* and are all to profit with all. It seems to me but reasonable to conclude that as the gospel ministry is of the *Spirit*, its operations and consummations are necessarily *spiritual*, and that those who are put into this ministry and to whom it is committed, and who only are set apart to the work thereof, must be qualified for the work alone by the *Spirit* by which they are set apart, and that in all essential respects, this qualification is full and complete. It seems to me to be gross presumption to claim that man by obsession can (of himself) embellish the work of God and thus better prepare one for the work unto which He had called him. It is said of God that: "He is the Rock, His work is perfect." (Deut. 32:4). This is true, or it is *not* true. It must be true, and the man who says to the contrary is, therefore, false in his declaration.

Most denominations of various religious orders in the world today have their synods, presbyteries, conferences, dioceses and boards which determine and decide who shall (and shall not) be educated for the ministry, and when he is sufficiently educated in their judgment, he is then accepted into their ministerial body. They will not allow one to preach and exercise the functions of the ministry until he is fully educated, as they see it, which goes to show that they do not think the Lord is capable of determining so grave a matter!

If those who are educated for the work of the ministry could preach the gospel after being thus qualified, the subject would put on an entirely different phase, but they cannot do this, we claim, neither after nor before; therefore, instead of becoming a power for good, as they claim, they become a power for evil, by being better equipped for the work of beguiling and leading into error the unsuspecting.

Christ said of Himself by His Apostle, Luke, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor." (Read Luke 4:18). The passing out of the Spirit upon Christ by God, His Father, was essential to His preaching the gospel, and in every way doing the will of His Father, because it was given for that purpose. He was made to fully and perfectly exercise in the work of the ministry as that great *Preacher* of divine Righteousness, and in Himself and by the Almighty power of God, His Father, which was given unto Him. He, and He alone, forever perfected the gospel ministry unto which He now puts His servants, who He also calls and sends them forth to preach His unsearchable riches and everlasting truth. And to every one of them is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. "Wherefore He saith, When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men" (Ephesians 4:8). Just as the Spirit of the Lord upon Christ enabled Him to preach the everlasting gospel, and otherwise do the will of His Father, even so do these gifts unto men enable them to preach His gospel, a dispensation of which is committed and imparted unto them.

(NOTE added by Hoyt D. F. Sparks on May 26, 2006: This article was written by Elder P. D. Gold and initially appeared in *Zion's Landmark* many years ago when Elder Gold was the editor. The current editor of *Zion's Landmark*, Elder J. M. Mewborn, republished it in the March-April 2006 edition. Timeless is the message contained therein: we continue still to advocate as high a secular education as possible for *everyone* but deny that it takes a secular education for a man to learn to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Subscriptions to *Zion's Landmark* may be addressed directly to Elder Mewborn, P. O. Box 1358, Coats, NC 27521, telephone 910-897-8770.)

EDITOR'S NOTE: Brother Sparks was the first one who called this worthy article to our attention.

## IN THE MAIL

**S**ince our last issue of *The Remnant*, I have received several responses to my ongoing "challenges" regarding (a) the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven and (b) predestination of the acts of men, as found in Acts 4.28. Having gone this far on these subjects, and having received these responses, it is only proper that I take the time and space to attend to them as publicly as were the challenges.

Even though some of the responses were public, made on Brother Hoyt Sparks' e-mail forum, I will not address the writers by name in these pages, as I do not have their express permission to do so. They know who they are, as does everyone on Brother Sparks' forum. It is enough for now to address the issues the correspondents introduced. The tradeoff is that I will condense some of the correspondence down to the essentials of the subjects, with the understanding that if any of the correspondents believes I have left out pertinent arguments he advanced, I will be happy to print his complete, unedited submissions, *over his signature*, and readdress his thoughts.

Two of the communications were posted on the Sparks forum, two were by phone, and one was by personal email sent directly to me. I may not have space in this issue to address them all. If this proves to be the case, then, Lord willing, I will take them up at another time. For now, I will address the two on Brother Sparks' forum.

\*

**1. An Elder from Florida** writes about the article we published by Elder H. H. Lefferts, and Premillennialism in general:

*I enjoyed reading the article that you sent which was written by Lefferts and published by CCMorris. Of course I cannot say that I agree with the sentiments and conclusions of it [Why does he "of course" disagree with Elder Lefferts?--CCM] I don't wish to get involved in a long winded argument over these issues. Out of respect for Bro. Morris I would not want to make this a public issue....*

I appreciate this Brother's kind approach. The reader may remember that I am the one who made a

*public issue* of these things, if it is indeed that, by reprinting Elder Lefferts' article and adding my related comments.

*...these very issues have been debated and written about from so many perspectives during the years that it is almost impossible to discuss it without merely quoting something someone else of one persuasion or the other has already said. Premillennialism [sic] has been around for a long time and has been embraced by men of great and sound faith and also not a few heretics of this and that stance. The same can be said of the other views of eschatology.*

(Editor's Note: Briefly, **Premillennialism** is the understanding that the thousand years mentioned six times in Revelation 20 is both literal and future, and that Christ's second advent, or second coming—His return to earth (Acts 1.11, Revelation 1.7)—will be literal, visible, and will precede the thousand years. **Amillennialism**, which is evidently the position of this correspondent, takes a figurative, allegorical approach to prophetic Scripture, says that the thousand years of Revelation 20 is figurative or symbolic of the present church age, and it is not to be taken literally.)

Comment: Your statement is generally true, but *quoting something someone else of one persuasion or the other has already said* practically assumes that one either accepts the Reformed, Calvinist, "spiritualizing," allegorical, Amillennial approach as a package, correct and complete in itself, or else one accepts the Arminian Darby-Scofield-Hal Lindsey-Tim LaHaye Premillennial approach as a package, correct and complete in itself. That is what 99% of those who have any opinion at all on **eschatology** do—they almost blindly accept one or the other position and then must force every Scripture verse to conform to their view. (**Eschatology** is "the doctrine of last things," or **end-time prophecy**; from the Greek *eschatos* meaning *farthest, final (of place or time)*; as in 1 Peter 1.5 (definition from Strong's Concordance).

This either/or approach ignores at least two basic facts, both pertinent to the millennial question:

1. In the first century after Christ and His apostles, "premillennialism" or something close akin to it was

a prevailing view (if not THE prevailing view) of the early church; and

2. Down through the years, there have been many outstanding proponents of sovereign grace principles, well established in the gospel of free grace, who were "premillennial."

Because of a lack of time and space, I cannot document these two facts here and now, but I hope to at some future time as the Lord wills and enables.

*I am no great theologian and most certainly not an eschatologist at all.*

You are not an *eschatologist*, probably because you use the amillennial approach; and, except for "the general judgment" and "the eternal state," **Amillennialism essentially has no eschatology.**

*But I see some principles that one must adopt in order to be a premillennialist which I at the present time simply cannot see as being in accordance with the principles taught in the scripture.*

Say on.

*One has to first be a literalist in order to hold this view. Now while I certainly believe the Bible to be "literally" true, I do not necessarily believe that every statement is to be taken literally.*

No one that I know of *believes that every statement is to be taken literally.* Even we "literalists" do not.

*The LORD himself said that Elijah was already come (of course referring to John the Baptist) but a literal view of the scripture would require Elijah to appear in the flesh. (mat.17:12). This is but one example of many statements which the scripture makes which are obviously not to be taken literally. All premillennialists recognize that this is true but then pick and choose the scriptures that they wish to take literally.*

Comment 1: I don't know that I've read that Elijah is to *appear in the flesh.* I personally believe he will,

but Matthew 17.12 does not say it in those words, nor does any other Scripture.

Comment 2: I do wish you would have continued. Your statement, *a literal view of the scripture would require Elijah to appear in the flesh*, leaves us all wondering just **when, where, why, and how** is Elijah **required** to appear in the flesh.

Comment 3: I find it interesting that those who comment from Matthew 17 (as you did) on the necessity of Elijah's coming (See and compare: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.—Malachi 4.5") never seem to comment on the fact that just nine verses back (Matthew 17.3), Elijah had just been seen on the Mount of Transfiguration with Jesus, "and spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem (Luke 9.31)." Do you see that Elijah did come, literally, on the Mount of Transfiguration with Christ, and this was *before* "the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD"? If Elijah never shows up again (but he will!), he has already made an appearance before "the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD." And was not what happened on the Mount **literal**?

Comment 4: Christ explained He was speaking hypothetically. "For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And **if ye will receive it**, this is Elias, which was for to come.—Matt. 11.13f; 17.11ff; Mark 9.11ff; Lk 1.17. The "**if ye will receive it**," as Christ expressed it, is plainly a hypothetical *if* and not a conditional *if*.

*This is but one example of many statements which the scripture makes which are obviously not to be taken literally. All premillennialists recognize that this is true but then pick and choose the scriptures that they wish to take literally.*

I would have appreciated your giving me some examples as to how you think **I** pick and choose *the scriptures that I wish to take literally*. In another article ("Figurative or Literal?" on page 9), I have addressed your concern about what objective criteria we might use to judge which a text is—whether it is to be understood as being literal or figurative. If you do not agree with my thoughts, at least we will have communicated about our differences, and that, I trust, is good.

*Secondly in order to hold to the premillennial view one must see a distinction between Jews and Gentiles in such a way as to make the LORD's dealings with a physical nation the substance of HIS purpose in the earth rather than it being the redemption of HIS elect from every tribe nation and tongue. There is only one "elect" people or either there are two. If there are two then Paul must have been confused.*

Comment 1: How is there a contradiction between God's electing at least one nation, Israel (would not the USA, or England, or a lot of other countries love to think they are "the elect nation"?), and His electing multitudes from every nation and tongue? Cannot He do both? If not, why not? "*Yea, before the day was I am He; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it* (Isaiah 43.13)?" God is the God of the physical universe as well as the spirit world. As such, He has ever made it plain, **literally** from Genesis to Revelation, that He has an elect **physical nation named Israel** whom He is not going to abandon, though their national redemption and salvation be a long time coming. "For, lo, I will command, and I will sift **the house of Israel among all nations**, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, **yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth** (Amos 9.9)."

Comment 2: You mention Paul. Paul devotes three chapters in Romans to national Israel, practically beginning with "for **my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Who are Israelites**; to whom pertaineth the adoption...." And practically ending with "And so **all Israel shall be saved**: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and **shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob**: for this is my covenant unto them, **when I shall take away their sins** (Romans 11.26f)."

Paul was not the one who was or is confused. He knew he was speaking about his blood kin according to the **FLESH**, and that the nation of Israel would be saved. Even if "Israel" here is "figurative" of the church (which it is not), when does God ever refer to the church as "Jacob"?

No; the one who is confused is the one who tries to force "Israel" into meaning "the church," something it does not mean. There are three entities in God's "economy": "Give none offence, neither to

the **Jews**, nor to the **Gentiles**, nor to the **church of God** (1 Corinthians 10.32),” and all three have a place in the eternal state, by God’s grace and mercy in the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Thirdly, in order to be a premillennialist one must equate Zionism with the gathering of Israel. This is only possible in the mind of someone who is holding one eye closed.*

This is a logical fallacy, and “holding one eye closed” has nothing to do with it. God uses unbelievers to suit His purpose. God no doubt “used” the Zionist movement to bring about the establishment of His predestinated plan to bring Israel back to the land of promise (Hebrews 11.9), even as He used Judas to bring about the arrest of Christ. His using Zionism was one of many means He is using to bring Israel back to their promised land.

I do not at all *equat*e “Zionism” with the gathering of Israel. One can observe Zionism and what it was historically, and its ongoing results, without *being* a Zionist or *equating* Zionism with the Old Testament prophecies of a restored Israel in the end times. God will not sub-contract this restoration to child labor: “And it shall come to pass in that day, that **the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people**, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And He shall set up an ensign for the nations, **and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth** (Isaiah 11.11f).” If He uses Zionism providentially to do this, so be it.

*I will confess that the premillennialists may turn out to be correct...*

Thank you for at least saying this. That is as magnanimous a concession as I’ve ever seen made in any discussion of this kind.

*...but if so I shall be greatly surprised.*

That should go without saying. The Lord’s people, raised and glorified in the image of Jesus

Christ, the Lord of glory, will all find much that will surprise them in that day.

*Until then we must hold to the principles of the glory of CHRIST’s redemptive work for HIS elect bride upon whom HIS love has been set from the foundation of the world.*

I would agree, by His grace. Thanks for writing.  
—CCM

\*

**2. The second correspondent supposedly** writes concerning predestination in Acts 4.28. On May 2, 2006, an Elder of the “Limited Predestination” persuasion wrote in Brother Sparks’ forum about the predestination of the deeds of men:

Brother Hoyt,

*Recently, and in the latest issue [sic] of “The Remnant” eld [sic] CC Morris made the challenge to limited predestinarians to prove something that neither he himself nor anyone else can either prove or disprove. That is, whether or not predestination includes the acts of men as well as the men themselves. This has been argued by men far more Scripturally intelligent than Eld [sic] Morris and myself also, and the argument has never been, neither will it ever be, settled by men. My failure to get the bible he offered will prove what I’m saying.*

Comment 1: This Elder writes far more than we can print, but we will print enough of what he says to give him, I trust, a fair hearing.

Comment 2: Elder: Your failure to get the Bible is because you did not answer the fact that a correct exegesis of Acts 4.28 is “For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel **predestinated** to be done.” Your position is that God does not predestinate *actions*; He only predestinates *people*—to be “conformed to the image of His Son,” “...unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto Himself,” to “obtaining an inheritance.” I see no evidence Conditionalists even believe He has predestinated His children to *these* things. The “Limiteds” are so preoccupied with

their Arminian “it’s up to you” theology that there is no room left for predestination in their thinking.

By way of background for Acts 4.28 (the entire account is in Acts 4), around which this discussion is supposed to revolve, we offer this review:

Peter and John had been beaten, and the Jews’ council had “commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.” The council “further threatened them” and “let them go.” “And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.” (Acts 4.18-23.)

Acts 4.24-28 says: “And when they [Peter and John’s “own company,” the church] heard that, they [the church] lifted up their voice to God [in prayer] with one accord, and said:

“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** [Greek, *proorizo*, **predestinated**] to be done.”

*The meaning of words offered by dictionary[sic] and lexicons cannot possibly teach what “Revelation brings.” They only give the meaning of words. The intent of the words used or misused, is usually understood or misunderstood by uninspired minds. I believe revelation brings the understanding of the intent of the words used.*

Reply: In other words, you do not care what God’s word says.

We communicate with words. Dictionaries and lexicons define words so people can communicate exactly; that is so that any two or more people can use the same word to mean the exact same thing.

“*They only give the meaning of words.*” Yes, that is what they are for. According to you, “*only the meaning of words*” has nothing to do with a discussion. You have no idea why anyone should care

if two men mean two entirely different things when they are using the same word.

Anyone who cannot spell the plural of *dictionary* shows publicly either his inability to use one, or his contempt for what words (including God’s inspired words in the Bible) mean, or both.

By “revelation” you evidently mean that your private interpretation, which can be anything you want it to be, is superior to what God says. God does not give “revelations” that contradict His written word. I’d like to know how you get your “revelations” about the mind of God, if it is apart from the Scriptures.

*I offer these questions to Eld [sic] Morris. James said, “Let no man say, (Eld. Morris included.) I am tempted of God...[Here he quotes James 1:13-16, then he asks:]*

*(1) Is James teaching us not to err just for the sake of avoiding error, or is he teaching us (2) to avoid the error of teaching the idea that men “DO” what they do because God, through the absolute predestination of all things, tempts man with evil to do evil?*

Reply 1: No “Absoluter” I know of teaches that God “*tempts man with evil to do evil.*” Your introducing this red herring is irrelevant.

Reply 2: Your citing James here has nothing to do with the correct exposition of Acts 4.28, therefore it is also irrelevant.

*...I believe James’ teaching is that the evil of man, does not come from God’s predestination, but is produced by an attribute of man which is lasciviousness [sic]. And that James is teaching us that it is erroneous [sic] to charge the wicked acts of men, produced by the lasciviousness in them to God’s predestination instead of it’s [sic] actual source, the heart of the man. It is one thing to be made subject to vanity, it is another thing altogether to succumb to it. Man is accountable for what he does, whether he does evil or whether he does good since he is capable of both.*

Comment 1: Frankly, I do not care what you believe. However, it is instructive that you publicly admit to believing that *Man is accountable for what he does, whether he does evil or whether he does good since he is capable of both.* If you hadn’t gone on public



record on this, there are some who would find it hard to believe that a man professing to be a Primitive Baptist Elder would admit to such tripe.

Comment 2: Since your expressed belief has nothing to do with the correct exposition of Acts 4.28, your comment is irrelevant to the subject.

*It is written, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain." (Psalms 76:10) Here it states plainly the source of the wrath that praises God, exactly in the same manner that Romans 5:12 gives the source of sin. Also, it teaches that what wrath of man that God does not use for his own praise, he restrains.*

*Tell me Eld [sic] Morris, Why would God restrain the wrath of man that he does not use to praise him, if he predestinated the wrath that he does use?*

Comment: This is totally irrelevant to Acts 4.28, but I have addressed this question in another column, "**Reply Concerning Psalm 76.10,**" which is too long to include in this issue. It will be printed in the November-December 2006 issue, if the Lord wills.

*This in itself defnately [sic] implies limited prdestination [sic]. The reason being that God does not use "all" the wrath of man to praise him, if he predestinated that wrath he restrains. If God predestinated all the wrath of man, yet uses only a portion of that wrath to praise him, and restrains the rest, he places limits by using only a portion and not all.*

Reply: We have shown—or will show—from the Scriptures, in the article on Psalm 76.10 (next issue, D. V.) that God uses all the wrath of man, restrained or not, for one reason or another, according to His purpose.

*I figure that although I did not use the dictionary [sic] and lexicons to prove my points, you owe me a leather bound bible unless you can prove your absolute prdestination [sic] of all things, with the same Scriptures [sic] I have offered to show why I believe in a limited predestination [sic].*

Comment 1: Your point is irrelevant, as it does not address the exposition of Acts 4.28. It appears you do not use a dictionary because you do not know how to use a dictionary.

Comment 2: I owe you nothing, as any child could see you have not remotely tried to bring out the correct exposition of Acts 4.28.

Comment 3: In this discussion, I do not have to prove *absolute* "predestination" [sic] or anything else. I have asked you or anyone else to address the Lord's predestination of men's actions as specified in Acts 4.28, which you have not done.

The correspondent adds in conclusion: *I write not for the sake of an argument, but to get to the truth of whether the Bible teaches "a" limited predestination as well as "the" absolute prdestination [sic] of all things.*

"Truth"? To quote someone whose words may be quite appropriately applied to what you have said thus far: "You can't handle the truth."

—C. C. Morris

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## FIGURATIVE OR LITERAL?

**L**et's begin with an example: *the fowls of Heaven* referred to in Revelation 19.17f, 21. I read where one commentator says these fowls are figurative of the ten kings of Revelation 17.16 because, he says, *they* (the kings) are said to "eat her [the harlot's] flesh and burn her with fire."

Since when do birds burn their prey with fire? Usually, most birds do not even cook their food. They certainly do not char their food, or what remains of it, to a fare-thee-well.

Again: Are *angels-equal-to-birds-equal-to-angels* merely because angels and birds both fly? If flying is our criterion, then we'd have to say jet airliners are equal to birds and angels because airplanes also fly.

**No mistake is more common in an amateur's attempt to interpret a Bible symbol than for him to equate one thing to another merely because the**

“symbol” and what it supposedly symbolizes has one (or more) common characteristic(s). That is not good enough.

In spite of this common failing, examples could be multiplied without end to display and disprove such fallacious reasoning: Your car is in my driveway; my car is in my driveway; *ergo*, your car is my car.

Jim-Bob gave his son a dollar; Jim-Bob gave the waitress a dollar; *ergo*, the waitress is Jim-Bob’s son.

Those who so “spiritualize” the Scriptures do not use the common sense of a child.

I once knew a man, armed with his Bible, a dictionary, and part of a grade-school education, who said, on the strength of Hebrews 7.26 (“For such an high priest **became us**....”) that when Elder So-and-so went into the stand, it wasn’t Elder So-and-so any more, that was **JESUS** in the stand doing the preaching. After all, he reasoned, the dictionary defines *became* as past tense of *become*, and to *become* means “**to come to be; as, a caterpillar becomes a butterfly**” (Webster). So Jesus, our high priest, *becomes* “**us**”—in this case He becomes whatever Elder is in the stand—just like a caterpillar becomes a butterfly! The Bible and the dictionary proved it (to *him*). And this man actually had ambitions to preach.

One can find common characteristics between **the church and Israel or Mount Zion in Jerusalem**. Just because Israel is God’s elect and the church is God’s elect, or the fact that God loves Israel and God loves the church, that does not make them the same thing or type and antitype. If a man loves his wife and he loves his daughter, does that make his daughter his wife? If a man loves his son and he also loves hamburgers, does that mean his son is a hamburger? Yet this is the exact same kind of reasoning that is heard being routinely passed off as “Bible exposition.”

Few realize that an invalid argument can have a correct conclusion tacked on the end. *This does not make the argument valid*. People often accept faulty logic or invalid conclusions because they agree with the conclusions and therefore have no motivation to question the confused reasoning which may or may not lead to the cherished conclusion.

Old Baptists reject “human reason and logic” as a means of arriving at spiritual truth; yet every one of us will use the logic we “reject” in order to prove what we believe is spiritual truth.

## HOW TO TELL IF A TEXT IS SYMBOLIC OR LITERAL; SOME HINTS

1. **SIMILES:** If a text, or a statement in general, says **like** or **as**, it is a figure of speech called a *simile*: In Luke 21.35 (“For **as** a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth”), **as** proves *snare* is a figure and not speaking of a literal snare; so Daniel Boone snaring wild animals was not a fulfillment of this prophecy.

2. **PARABLES:** (a) If the text says it is a **parable**, then it symbolizes something. A parable is a story that illustrates some point. In Luke 20.9-19, both verse 9 (“Then began he to speak to the people this **parable**; A certain man planted a vineyard, and let it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time....”) and verse 19 (“...they perceived that he had spoken this **parable** against them”) say that the rest of this passage is a parable. From this, anyone who can read the words may gather that a vineyard and husbandmen may at least sometimes be used to parallel biblical truths that may be worded more plainly elsewhere. One might then be properly curious about who the *certain man* might be who planted the vineyard in the first place, before his going into “a far country” (where?) and returning after a long time.

(b) Luke 21.11 (“And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven”) does not say **as** or **like** a famine or that something is **similar to** pestilences; therefore we understand earthquakes, famines, and pestilences to be literal, and fearful sights, great wonders, and heaven is also literal and neither symbolic nor figurative.

It may come as a shock to some, but God can say exactly what He means, and He can mean exactly what He says, and He often does both.

3. **METAPHORS:** Instead of saying, as does a simile, one thing is *like* another, a **metaphor** is a figure of speech that says one thing **is** another. To say a man is *like* a wolf is a *simile*; to say he **is** a wolf is a **metaphor**. A metaphor is not to be taken literally.

**Metaphors** are harder to handle than similes, especially for the all-or-nothing kind of mentality that says, “All right, if you want to say the Bible is so literal, and God always means exactly what He says, then the church really is built on a **ROCK**, and **BREAD** really is Christ’s **body**, and **WINE** really is

His **blood**, because Christ said, “Upon the **ROCK** I will build my church,” “This **IS** my body,” and “This **IS** my blood.”

It was this kind of stubborn closed-mindedness on the one hand and ignorance of biblical *figures of speech* like **metaphors** on the other that drove the Roman Catholic church to the doctrine of *transubstantiation* (the idea that the bread and wine they use in their observance of the Lord’s supper is literally changed into the flesh and blood of Christ).

Because of this arrogant insistence that a metaphor means “**this**” **IS** really, **LITERALLY** “**that**,” Rome martyred untold thousands of Christians who, recognizing that Christ was speaking metaphorically, refused to submit to Rome’s unparalleled ignorance of a simple figure of speech.

### Simile Or Metaphor?

Revelation 17.15 says, “And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, **are** peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.” This is a **metaphor**, because the text says they **are**, metaphorically, what they literally **are not**—we do not drink bottled peoples or fill our swimming pools with chlorinated nations.

But Isaiah 57.20 (“...the wicked **are like** the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.”) uses **like**, making this text a simile. So likewise Isaiah 17.12f (“*Woe to the multitude of many people, which make a noise like the noise of the seas; and to the rushing of nations, that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters! The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters: but God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind.*”); this is a double simile, not to be taken literally.

With such things in mind, therefore, one must search the Scriptures, comparing spiritual things with spiritual, in order to get the complete picture. Whether the waters and seas are a simile or a metaphor, we nevertheless understand such to be symbolic language rather than literal.

4. A parable, a symbol, or a prophecy may have more than one fulfillment. Examples:

(a) In Daniel, one beast is Antiochus Epiphanes in the past and the beast of Revelation 13 in the future.

(b) In Matthew and in Luke, prophecies of the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 blend with the yet future destruction around the time of Armageddon.

5. In Scripture a word-picture may be used both symbolically and literally, such as the priesthood (see **priesthood**, below, as one example).

6. Just because points 4 and 5 above are true, it doesn’t mean that all parables, symbols, or prophecies **do** have more than one fulfillment, or that **every** word may be used **both** symbolically **and** literally.

7. I know, realize, and freely admit that there is symbolic and figurative language in the Bible. Along with this fact I have noted that preterists (and others who use a highly figurative approach to the Bible) often see as literal what I see as figurative, and they often take as figurative what I understand as literal.

8. **Applying a prophecy of a yet-future event to a past event** leads only to confusion and error. Prime examples are the preterists’ errors of saying (a) Christ’s second advent has already taken place, (b) we are presently in the new heaven and the new earth, (c) and the resurrection is past already. Preterists could not make such heavy inroads among Old Baptists in particular and the Reformed churches in general if it were not for the groundwork laid by Amillennialism’s “spiritualizing” every text possible. This practice has undermined the Old Baptists’ ancient position of a plain, literal understanding of the Scriptures.

9. Using Scriptures to understand Scriptures by searching and comparing, one does not need Josephus and other historians to “interpret” them. Historians are great to fill in details, and Josephus can give the reader many insights into the history of the Jews; but an education in medieval European and Asiatic history is unnecessary to understand the Bible.

If one is not well-acquainted with the fine points of history, how would he be able to “know” that the *locusts* of Revelation 9 represent either (a) the hordes of Genghis Kahn, or (b) the Mohammedans during the era of the Crusades, or (c) the B-29 bombers of World War II, or (d) the helicopters of more recent wars, or (e) something else, depending on who is “interpreting” this chapter and in what era? How can “the common man” relate to such obscure and strained “interpretations”? It has been said that if we heard fifty preachers expound the same text we would hear at least fifty-one interpretations. Such is likely when anyone and

everyone feels free to *spiritualize* to his heart's content, saying whatever pops into his mind and out of his mouth, according to his own personal understanding, prejudices, and preconceived notions.

10. The terms "**interpret**" and "**interpretation**" themselves have been so abused as to become foolish. "MY interpretation is THIS... what is YOUR interpretation?" As if reading the Bible was little more than a word game. Sometimes it is as it was among the Athenians in Acts 17.21: "For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing."

If we were to read our newspapers that way, where would it end?

"There was an earthquake in M'fuijkl. 7,000 were killed and one-tenth of the city of K'kala fell." Do we read that in our newspaper and say, "Earthquake! What's **your interpretation** of that?"

"I believe it means 7,000 people were convicted of sin, and there was a great revival as these 7,000 were slain to themselves and to the flesh." One would go crazy reading their newspaper like that.

If we understand the seven thousand dead in M'fuijkl to be literal, why should we think Revelation 11.13 is anything but literal? "*And the same hour was there a great earthquake,*" the text says, "*and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.*"

11. Depending on its context, a word can be either figurative or symbolic. Here we will take a look at some of the many objects that are used in both ways in the Scriptures:

**The (human) Body**—Literal: "And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison. And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother. And his disciples came, and took up **the body**, and buried it, and went and told Jesus." (Matthew 14.10ff)

Symbolic: "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his **body**, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." (Ephesians 1.22f)

**Bonds**—Literal: "And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment." (Hebrews 11.36)

Symbolic: "Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in

the bonds of the gospel (Philemon 13)." I sometimes get correspondence signed, "In bonds of love," or, "In gospel bonds." I appreciate the sentiments that move the writers to so style themselves. We must never forget, however, Paul was bound in real chains, in real prisons (Colossians 4.18, 2 Timothy 1.16).

**Bones**—Literal: "And when he was come into his house, he took a knife, and laid hold on his concubine, and divided her, together with her bones, into twelve pieces, and sent her into all the coasts of Israel (Judges 19.29)." "He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken (Psalm 34.20)."

Symbolic: "The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry. And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live?" (Ezekiel 37.1ff)

How do we know these bones are symbolic or figurative? Because God said, "Son of man, these bones are **the whole house of Israel** (verse 11)," a metaphor.

**Clean animals**—Literal: "Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female (Genesis 7.2)."

Symbolic: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world (John 1.29)."

**Clouds**—Literal: "And it shall come to pass, when I bring a **cloud** over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the **cloud** (Genesis 9.14)." "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a **cloud** received him out of their sight (Acts 1.9)." "Behold, he cometh with **clouds**; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen (Revelation 1.7)."

Symbolic: "These are wells without water, **clouds** that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever (2 Peter 2.17)"; "...clouds they are without water, carried about of winds...(Jude 12)."

**Dogs**—Literal: "This is the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel (2 Kings 9.36)."

Symbolic: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs (Matthew 7.6)."

**Dove**—Literal: “Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground (Genesis 8.8).”

Symbolic: “O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice...(Song 2.14).”

**Eyes**—Literal: “And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan...(Genesis 13.10).”

Symbolic: “...he kept him as the apple of his eye (Deuteronomy 32.10).”

How do we know this is a symbolic use? Because of the word **as**, making it a simile.

**Fish**—Literal: “And the fish that is in the river shall die, and the river shall stink (Exodus 7.18).”

Symbolic: “Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith the LORD, and they shall fish them; and after will I send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks (Jeremiah 16.16).”

How do we know this is symbolic? Because the previous verse tells the reader, “The LORD liveth, that brought up **the children of Israel** from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers.”

**Fowls of the air**—Literal: “And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven (Genesis 1.20).”

Symbolic: “And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up (Matthew 13.4).”

Jesus said these fowls represent **the wicked one**: “When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart.”

**Fruit**—Literal: “And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.”

Symbolic: “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth **fruit**, and that your **fruit** should remain...(John 15.16).” “But the **fruit** of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith...(Galatians 5.22f).”

**Goats**—Literal: “Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats; and I will

make them savoury meat for thy father, such as he loveth (Genesis 27.9).”

Symbolic: “And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left (Matthew 25.32f).” How do we know this is symbolic? Because it is a simile.

**Gold**—Literal: “And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold (Genesis 13.2).”

Symbolic: “Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble...(1 Corinthians 3.12).”

**Grass**—Literal: “And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so (Genesis 1.11).”

Symbolic: “...All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass (Isaiah 40.6f).”

**Heart**—Literal: “Then said Joab, I may not tarry thus with thee. And he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak (2 Samuel 18.14).”

Symbolic: “The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond: it is graven upon the table of their heart, and upon the horns of your altars (Jeremiah 17.1).”

How do we know this is a symbol? Because the literal heart does not have a table, and because their heart is not literally a stone—it is still a blood-pump. Zechariah 7.12 says, “Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets....” We still use the figure of speech whenever we say someone is “hard-hearted.” An adamant stone was the hardest natural substance known to men, probably a diamond.

**House**—Literal: “And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him...(Acts 28.30).”

Symbolic: “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.” (The “house” in Matthew 23.38 is “the temple” in chapter 24.1) How do we know this was symbolic? Because Christ was using a figure of speech called *synecdoche* (a part used in place of the whole),

with *house* meaning the Jewish temple and the entire Pharisaical system it had come to represent.

**Jewels**—Literal: “And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah (Genesis 24.53).”

Symbolic: “And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him (Malachi 3.17).”

**Melchisedec**—Literal: “And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God (Genesis 14.18).”

Symbolic: “For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God... but made **like** unto the Son of God...(Hebrews 7.1ff).”

**Moon**—Literal: “There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars (1 Corinthians 15.41).”

Symbolic: “And there appeared a great wonder [Greek, *semeion*, from which we get words such as *semaphore*; a sign] in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars (Revelation 12.1).”

How do we know this is symbolic? (a) Because of the word *semeion*, sign; and (b) because Jacob was given the interpretation by divine inspiration: “And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the **moon** and the eleven stars made obeisance to me...his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and **thy mother** and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth (Genesis 37.9f)?” Comparing this with the woman of Revelation 12.1, she is the nation of Israel as dreamed of by Joseph and as interpreted by God through Jacob.

**Mustard seed**—Literal: “...a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: which indeed is the least of all seeds...(Matthew 13.31f).”

Symbolic: “If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed...(Matthew 17.20, Luke 17.6).”

**Priesthood**—Literal: “And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood...(Hebrews 7.5).”

Symbolic: “But this man [Jesus Christ], because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood (Hebrews 7.24)”; i.e., the Levitical priesthood was typical of the priesthood of Christ.

**Rivers**—Literal: “In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates (Genesis 15.18).”

Symbolic: “He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water (John 7.38).”

**Sand**—Literal: “...he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand (Exodus 2.12).”

Symbolic: “That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies (Genesis 22.17).”

**Seas**—Literal: “And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good (Genesis 1.10).”

Symbolic: “But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt (Isaiah 57.20).”

**Serpent**—Literal: “As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall and a serpent bit him (Amos 5.19)”

Symbolic: “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up (John 3.14).”

**Sheep**—Literal: “...Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground (Genesis 4.2).”

Symbolic: ...I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd (John 10.15f).

**Sow (female pigs, hogs)**—Literal: “But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire (2 Peter 2.22).”

Symbolic: The same text (2 Peter 2.22) uses the literal sow to represent apostates within the church.

**Stars**—Literal: “And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also (Genesis 1.16).”

Symbolic: “...there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel...(Numbers 24.17).”

**Stone(s)**—Literal: “...when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread (Matthew 4.3).”

Symbolic: “The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the LORD’S doing; it is marvellous in our eyes (Psalm 118.22f).” “Jesus saith unto them, ‘Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner...(Matthew 21.42)?’” “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).”

**Sun**—Literal: “The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar (Genesis 19.23).”

Symbolic: “But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings...(Malachi 4.2).”

**Swords**—Literal: “And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords (Luke 22.38).”

Symbolic: “Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth (Revelation 2.16).”

**The Tabernacle and its furnishings**—Literal: “Moreover thou shalt make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet (Exodus 26.1).”

Symbolic: Space forbids even a small attempt to show how the tabernacle and its furnishing typified the Lord Jesus Christ, His person and work.

**Trees, branches**—Literal: “And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down **branches** from the **trees**, and strowed them in the way (Matthew 21.8).”

Symbolic: “To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called **trees** of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified (Isaiah 61.3).” “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous **Branch**, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth (Jeremiah 23.5).” “...**trees** whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots (Jude 12).”

**Unclean animals (Acts 10)**—Literal: “Or if a soul touch any unclean thing, whether it be a carcase of an **unclean beast**, or a carcase of unclean cattle, or the carcase of **unclean creeping things**, and if it be hidden from him; he also shall be unclean, and guilty (Leviticus 5.2).”

Symbolic: “...God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean (Acts 10.28).” See Acts 10.10-28, or better, the entire chapter, for a complete picture of how the animals Peter saw in the vision typified men whom Peter thought were unclean.

**Vine**—Literal: “All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the **vine** tree, from the kernels even to the husk (Numbers 6.4).”

Symbolic: “I am the **vine**, ye are the branches (John 15.5).”

**Vineyard**—Literal: “And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a **vineyard** (Genesis 9.20).”

Symbolic: “...I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his **vineyard**. My wellbeloved hath a **vineyard** in a very fruitful hill...For **the vineyard** of the LORD of hosts is **the house of Israel**, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant (Isaiah 5.1-7).”

**Wandering Stars (Comets, meteors, the visible planets)**—Literal: “Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him (Matthew 2.2).” The morning star and the evening star, as well as comets, were known as “wandering stars” in biblical times.

Symbolic: “These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever (Jude 12-13).”

**Water**—Literal: “Let a little **water**, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet (Genesis 18.4).” “And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain **water**: and the eunuch said, See, here is **water**; what doth hinder me to be baptized (Acts 8.36)?”

Symbolic: “...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 (John 4.14).”

**Waves of the sea**—Literal: “And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the **waves** (Matthew 8.24).”

Symbolic: “Raging **waves** of the sea, foaming out their own shame (Jude 13).”

**Wheat and Tares**—Literal: “But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and

went his way (Matthew 13.25).” In this parable Christ is using a literal wheat field and literal weeds called tares to illustrate a point He is making about the kingdom of heaven.

Symbolic: “The field is the world; the **good seed [wheat]** are the children of the kingdom; but the **tares** are the children of the wicked one (Matthew 13.38).”

**Wind**—Literal: “Fire, and hail; snow, and vapours; stormy **wind** fulfilling his word (Psalm 148.8).” “But the LORD sent out a great **wind** into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken (Jonah 1.4).”

Symbolic: “That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every **wind** of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive (Ephesians 4.14).”

\*

The above examples barely begin to list the many possible illustrations. The point is, almost any natural object or action can be used as a parable, figure, type, or symbol of a spiritual truth.

I have deliberately avoided many often-used terms and illustrations as *angels, Israel, the Jordan River, the Promised Land, Mount Zion, Jerusalem, Noah’s ark* as a type of Christ, and things like “*the natural man*” versus “*the spiritual man*,” because (a) some are literal objects or places that are not necessarily types or figures of anything else; (b) some have no clear-cut scriptural statement that makes them a figure or symbol; (c) some are in dispute as to whether or not they are really figurative of what some say they are; or (d) any or all of the above. For instance, *crossing the Jordan River into the Promised Land* is not a picture of “dying and going to heaven.” We probably have the Stamps-Baxter jazz-book to thank for that one. *Angels* are God’s messengers, whether spirit-beings or human; the term *angel* is not figurative. While *Israel, Jerusalem, and Mount Zion* have some things in common with the church, they are not often, if ever, a symbol or figure of it.

How then do we know whether language is figurative or literal?

*Common sense* is **not** necessarily a good criterion, because it is tainted by what we believe is possible. Falling back on human reasoning, we tend to exclude as impossible anything we cannot imagine as possible.

As a final example, when Christ said, “...if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out (Luke 19.40),” reason tells most people stones do not cry out, so they conclude this must have some “spiritual” application; say, it must be *hard and stony hearts* crying out. Aside from the fact that such an “interpretation” goes completely opposite to what Christ is saying (those with hard and stony hearts are the very ones who would NOT cry out in such a case), this approach pits our poor, depraved, “common sense” against what the Lord Jesus said, and against the God with whom all things are possible—including limestone and granite responding to our sovereign God. It exalts our pitifully limited understanding of this material creation above the God who made it, and with whom **all things** are possible.

—C. C. Morris

### Jeremiah 23.6

**I**n His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is His name whereby He shall be called,

**THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

### DNA

**H**ere I am, an average size human (6 ft., 150 lbs.) said to contain 50 billion cells ( 50,000,000,000 ), each cell able to process hundreds of chemical reactions per second. I came from 46 strands of DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid), 23 strands from an egg and 23 strands from a sperm, and these strands fused during fertilization to form my 23 part genetic code. Each strand of my DNA is made up of over 3 million (3,000,000) building blocks arranged in the correct code sequence to make me what I am. It took researchers some 10 years, working with the most advanced computers, equipment, and processes and 480 x 1 billion x 1 billion (480,000,000,000,000,000,000) trials to determine most of the building block sequence in a DNA molecule.



In light of the above information do I believe that Mother Nature could mix some primordial soup and by trial and error bring me forth? No. I challenge anyone to prove to me the process by which she could accomplish the above for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

Don't throw Darwin's "Origin of Species" at me. Darwin wrote about how finches on one island had different beaks from finches on nearby islands. He did not write about the origin of Kingdoms, Phylums, Classes, Orders, Families, Genera, and Species, the lowest rung on the general classification of any organism. His work did nothing to explain the origin of birds.

Oparin, a Russian scientist, in his "theory on the origin of life," said that lightning struck some primordial soup and thus formed some basic proteins. He set up an experiment to show that this was possible. Okay! Then what? How did these proteins come together to form me? Neither Oparin nor any of his ilk have been able to provide the rest of the story. That's what I want to hear. An hypothesis becomes a theory when it is has been proven. To call an unproven notion a theory is scientific heresy.

To me, science has proven that my life and all life was created. It was impossible for natural selection to give rise to the complexity and multiplicity of life proven by science to exist on earth. I believe I know about the origin of life and will gladly discuss it with anyone who believes in that God who made the world and all things therein seeing that He is Lord of Heaven and Earth. Nonbelievers need not call, especially a certain judge who recently ruled that only evolution could be taught as the origin of life. I would only say to him, "Judge, I have more facts to prove what I believe than you have to prove what you believe." Evolution shows such things as why people in cold climates have lighter skin color and fewer sweat glands than people in warmer climates, and nothing more. You say that a human arose from some primordial soup by natural selection, trial and error, or any other natural process and I will say, "Show me how."

—Elder Lynwood Jacobs

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December, 2005

Editor's Comment: To get an idea of how possible or impossible it would be, according to mathematical probability, for "chance" or "luck" to construct you or me, a well-qualified mathematician did some calculating. He likened the odds of our DNA's developing by random chance (according to *evolutionary theory*) to someone's marking a silver dollar and hiding it somewhere in Texas. (Texas, including water surface, is about 267,338 square miles, give or take a few.) Then say we cover the entire state of Texas three feet deep with silver dollars. Next, we blindfold someone else and turn him loose to wander freely about the entire state, wherever he wants, as much as he pleases, and somewhere along the way have him rummage around in the coins beneath his feet and pick one of them up. If he correctly finds the one silver dollar that was previously marked and hidden, that would have taken the same mathematical odds as would our DNA's having developed "by chance." In other words, our DNA, which (humanly speaking) makes us exactly what we are, is in itself mathematical proof of God's intelligent design. Either that, or we really are the result of a lucky accident.

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## THE BURDEN OF DAMASCUS ISAIAH 17.1

*"The burden of Damascus. Behold, Damascus is taken away from being a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap."*

**T**his has never happened yet, the destruction of Damascus, but it will.

Damascus is one of the oldest cities in the world. It was probably while on his way from Ur to the land of Canaan that Abram obtained his steward, Eliezer, while passing through Damascus (Genesis 15.2). It was an old city in Abram's day.

Damascus has never been destroyed. Not in Isaiah's day or soon after; not in the days of the Greek and Roman empires, or in the Dark Ages, or in medieval times, or during the Crusades.

During its long history, Damascus has indeed had its battles and wars, and it has been conquered, and it has changed governments, but the city has never been reduced to a heap of ruins.

Not yet.

Damascus was not destroyed during World War I. Lawrence of Arabia galloped his camel all around those

hot sands in his battles, but Damascus was never “taken away from being a city.” Lawrence and his men destroyed the railroad to Damascus, but he did not destroy Damascus.

World War II raged all around the Mediterranean Sea, through all its coastlands and surrounding countries, but nobody destroyed Damascus.

“*The fortress also shall cease from Ephraim, and the kingdom from Damascus, and the remnant of Syria: they shall be as the glory of the children of Israel, saith the LORD of hosts (verse 3).*” This did indeed have a partial fulfillment in Old Testament times. “Ephraim” was another name often used for Israel’s idolatrous northern ten tribes, which were carried into Assyrian captivity in 721 BC; but Damascus was not destroyed.

Verse 12 says, “*Woe to the multitude of many people, which make a noise like the noise of the seas; and to the rushing of nations, that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters!*”

This simile is reminiscent of Isaiah 57.20: “*But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.*” It parallels the *metaphor* in Revelation 17.15: “*And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.*”

“*13 The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters: but God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind. 14 And behold at eveningtide trouble; and before the morning he is not. This is the portion of them that spoil us, and the lot of them that rob us.*” Compare this with Psalm 124:

“*If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, now may Israel say; 2 If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, when men rose up against us: 3 Then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us: 4 Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul: 5 Then the proud waters had gone over our soul. 6 Blessed be the LORD, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth. 7 Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped. 8 Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth (Psalm 124).*” The simile of Isaiah 17.12-13 becomes a metaphor in Psalm 124.

Now you know what is going to happen to Damascus. When Damascus is destroyed, you might remember you read about it in Isaiah 17. And, based only on the prophecy in Isaiah 17, you heard about it here. Remember, when **Damascus** is “taken away from being a city,” and all that remains of it is “a ruinous heap.”

—C. C. Morris

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## A STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

**T**he 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.