

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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PREMILLENNIALISM AND OUR PRINCIPLES, PART 2

Some Introductory Remarks On The Major Prophetic Views

Of course there certainly is far more contained in the Bible than is reflected in our Statement of Principles, or for that matter, in any such statement or confession of faith.

Our Principles (printed on the last page of each issue of *The Remnant*) are a condensed and generalized “confession of faith” which we believe are essential to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and in harmony with the beliefs of Old School Baptists in general. These fifteen principles, however, are not *all* that is essential in order to declare the whole counsel of God.

The second coming of Christ is also an essential of His gospel, but was not included in our “Principles” because there is much variance in the beliefs of brethren as to when Christ will return, how, and why, and what He will do when He returns.

By general agreement among men who discuss the Bible, prophetic views (like most Bible doctrines) have names assigned to them for quick and easy identification. There are the **amillennial**, **premillennial**, and **postmillennial** views, among others, but historically these are the three main views of biblical prophecy. “Millennial,” having to do with a millennium or a thousand years, is common to all these names.

Amillennialism, meaning “no millennium” (i.e., Amillennialists say “the thousand years” of Revelation

20 does not really mean *a literal thousand years*), takes the “spiritual” approach, applying Old Testament prophecies of Israel and Christ’s kingdom to the church “spiritually” or “figuratively. Their position is that the church is now “spiritual Israel,” and it is Christ’s kingdom wherein He presently reigns spiritually in His church. Other than the final judgment and the eternal state, amillennialists seem to have no view of prophecy that is yet to be fulfilled in the future.

1. Amillennialism is perhaps the most common view among Primitive Baptists, with reason:

(a) Amillennialism is more popular in the worldly religions and, since it poses no threat to corrupt politicians, it fits well with the politics of this world.

(b) Amillennialism is safe, because it offends no one. It was the position of all the established Protestant and Reformed religions—the Anglicans, the Puritans, the Protestants of the Reformation, and **Roman Catholicism**, from which the others all got it.

(c) Because it was the popular position when the persecuted Baptists were seeking to be legitimized and recognized by the State-approved denominations (e.g., the Church of England in the British Isles, the Puritans in the early days of the United States, etc.), it was perhaps easier for the Baptists to adopt Amillennialism in an effort to “go along to get along.” In effect that is what they did when they adopted the Westminster and Savoy confessions of faith almost verbatim as **the Baptist London Confession of Faith of 1689**. It was easier for them to accommodate “the powers that be” than it was for them to continue to hold out for their ancient position that **all governments of this world, and all other religions and religious denominations**

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Elder C. C. Morris
Editor and Publisher
P O Box 1004
Hawkins, Texas 75765
Phone 1-903-769-4822

The Remnant is sent free of any obligation
to all interested persons.

Address all correspondence to:

THE REMNANT PUBLICATIONS

P O BOX 1004

HAWKINS, TX 75765-1004

Phone 1-903-769-4822

E-mail: ccmorris@the-remnant.com

Web sites: www.the-remnant.com
and www.primitive-baptist.com

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other than themselves are of this world; all are both antichrist and antichristian, destined to be destroyed by Christ at His return.

2. Premillennialism's understanding is that Christ's kingdom is both literal and yet future: He and His glorified saints shall reign on this earth in near Eden-like conditions, enforcing the law of God on what is left of humanity after about half the world's population is destroyed in the plagues described in the book of Revelation. It is the ancient view of the church of the first few centuries following the New Testament era of Christ and His apostles as recorded in the four gospels and the book of Acts. Premillennialism was generally the church's view from then until about the time of Constantine (AD 312 and following). To find historic Premillennial Baptists, by and large, one must go back before the fifteenth century and following, when to be accepted among the mainstream religious denominations, many of the Baptists adopted much of mainstream Protestant doctrine—including "moderate Calvinism," Arminianism, and Amillennialism.

3. Postmillennialism predicts the eventual conversion of the world to Christ by the spread of the gospel. It seems to have gotten its biggest impetus during and after the Industrial Revolution with the advent of steamships and new means of communication and travel. By these *means* the Arminian churches envisioned that the gospel would quickly be spread to

the “unevangelized” nations. Postmillennialists predicted the world would be converted within a generation or so after Mr. Fulton invented his steamboat. (We are still waiting.) When the world is converted, as they see it, there will be a thousand years of unparalleled peace and prosperity, **after which** (hence the “Post” in Postmillennialism)—in their view—Christ will return. Compared to Amillennialism and Premillennialism, Postmillennialism is evidently a minority view of prophecy. Of necessity it implies that the world is getting “better and better” as more and more people are converted. Their “better and better” outlook stands directly opposed to the Premillennial view that “evil men and seducers shall wax **worse and worse**, deceiving, and being deceived (2 Timothy 3.13),” and that this (church) age will end, as *every* preceding age has, in apostasy or rebellion against God.

Whatever one’s view of the prophetic Scriptures (Pre-, Post-, or A-millennial), we have never made one’s views about the return of Christ a “test of fellowship,” and most people who discuss these things do not. Sad to say, some brethren evidently do.

One’s view of prophecy has nothing to do with one’s view of the doctrine of salvation. That is, a person can be a believer in God’s sovereign election and salvation by grace and be either amillennial or premillennial. Likewise, a person can be an Arminian and be either amillennial or premillennial. Put the other way, Amillennialists may be either “Calvinistic” or Arminian, and Premillennialists may likewise be either “Calvinistic” or Arminian.

Confusion comes about when people wrongly conclude that, because so many Arminians are premillennial, all Premillennialists are therefore necessarily Arminians. There is not a word of truth in such a superficial misunderstanding. Again: One’s view of prophecy has nothing whatsoever to do with one’s view of the doctrine of salvation.

Continuing From the Last Issue...

In the last issue we were pursuing the above fact, that there is no contradiction between the Premillennial view and the doctrine of God’s sovereign grace embraced in *The Remnant’s* principles. We left off on the combined fifth and sixth articles of our principles:

5—The eternal personal election of the redeemed in Christ, before the world be-

gan, 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; and

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.

We have before us a number of interrelated points joined by God’s eternal purpose and therefore by His predestination. To begin, we list some of those points:

- The eternal personal election of a fixed number
- Redemption in Christ
- Eternity—before the world began
- The vital union of Christ and His people
- The fall of Adam and his race, and the results
- The total depravity and just condemnation of all mankind
- The total inability of any sinner to save himself from his fallen state
- Christ’s blood atonement (ransom)
- Christ’s redemption of His elect people; efficacious and effectual
- The will and purpose of God
- His Reconciliation of His people unto Himself (in and by Christ Jesus)

As was said in Part 1, Principles 5 and 6 cover several closely-linked points not usually thought of as relating to end-time prophecy. Yet, as these principles hold true for all eternity, all biblical prophecy is consistent with them. The eternal election of God’s people and their eternal union with Christ; their fall in Adam and their resultant spiritual death, depravity, and just condemnation; their inability to recover themselves from this state; Christ’s effectual blood atonement for them, whereby God reconciled them unto Himself. Coupled with Principle number 8, below, we have an even more complete picture of God’s electing grace, love, and mercy in its eternal effect. All His elect, every one of them, without the loss of one, will be brought from their fallen

state of death in sin into eternal life and glory in Christ, and by His grace they will then be preserved and brought into the eternal state of glory.

For convenience, these doctrinal facts may be combined and addressed under four main headings:

1. Eternity—before the world began; The will and purpose of God; The eternal personal election of a fixed number; The vital union of Christ and His people

2. Redemption in Christ; Christ's redemption of His elect people; efficacious and effectual; Christ's blood atonement (ransom); God's Reconciliation of His people unto Himself (in and by Christ Jesus)

3. The fall of Adam and his race, and the results; The total depravity and just condemnation of all mankind; The total inability of any sinner to save himself from his fallen state

4. The final preservation, perseverance, and eternal happiness of all the sons of God, by grace alone

1. ETERNITY

A. Before the world began

“And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to **the eternal purpose** which He **purposed** in Christ Jesus our Lord (Ephesians 3.9-11).”

This text takes the enlightened reader (Christ is the Light) into eternity. God has an eternal purpose. It cannot be added to, taken from, or in any way changed. To say it changed, and it was a change for the better, would be to say God's purpose was not perfect to begin with. To say it changed for the worse would be the same as saying it is not perfect now. Either conclusion is inconsistent with the doctrine of the one, true, eternal, unchangeably perfect God of all creation.

This eternal *purpose* (noun) was *purposed* (verb) in Christ Jesus our Lord. It is in HIM and HIM ALONE that all of the attributes and perfections of God shine forth. Jehovah Elohim determined that whatever He would do, He would do it by and through the second person of the Godhead—God the Son, the Son of God. He would create all of creation by HIM and through HIM, with the intent that the creation would be plunged into total ruin, but only temporarily so, in order that He might the more fully show forth His

divine perfections and attributes. This would be done solely by the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Romans 3.24), to the praise of the glory of His grace (Ephesians 1.6), “That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in 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 2.10f).”

B. The Will, Pleasure, and Purpose of God

God has both a **will** and a **purpose** in the creation; neither His will nor His purpose will be frustrated.

“And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured Him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation: and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and He doeth according to **His will** in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest thou? (Daniel 4.34-35)”

“In whom [i.e., in Christ, the Beloved] we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace; wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of **His will**, according to **His good pleasure** which He hath **purposed** in Himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him: in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the **purpose** of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of **His own will**: that we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ (Ephesians 1.7-12).”

1. God's sovereign pleasure

Revelation 4.11: “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for **thy pleasure** they are and were created.” All things were created for His pleasure. We certainly do not believe our God is worried, anxious, or “concerned” about the things that trouble some men so greatly, “which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the

earth.” He has declared the end from the beginning. That “end” extends endlessly through all future ages.

When we say God is *pleased* with these things, we do not mean He is pleased with unrighteousness *as such*, but only in the sense that He will completely manifest and vindicate His wisdom, holiness, righteousness, honor, and glory in its destruction. “The LORD is well pleased for His **righteousness’ sake**; He will magnify the law, and make it honourable (Isaiah 42.21).” So He is well pleased for His *righteousness’ sake*, not with unrighteousness as such.

He is pleased enough to have sin and unrighteousness here **for the time being, and not as an end in itself**; but sin and its results will be undone by the complete and finished work of Christ Jesus. The unrighteousness of all men will serve its exact purpose in either

(a) magnifying His grace, love, mercy, wisdom, and power in saving His people from their unrighteousnesses by His life, atoning death, resurrection, ascension, and intercession in their behalf, and His coming again to “receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also (John 14.3)”; or

(b) the just condemnation and everlasting punishment (Matthew 25.46) of the reprobated wicked, to the praise of His holiness, righteousness, justice, wisdom, and wrath against all that stands opposed to Him. That is all in accord with His sovereign pleasure, will, purpose, and design.

2. Satan was a part of God’s will and purpose

“He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. **For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil** (1 John 3.8).”

The manifestation of the Son of God for **this purpose** necessitates the devil’s existence *as the devil*, working the works of the devil. In the sense expressed in 1 John 3.8, the purpose of Christ’s coming would not exist if God had not decreed the existence and fall of Satan.

Satan (Lucifer) is a created being, of the order of cherubs (Ezekiel 28.14); he is not an eternal being. The idea of “two eternal principles” (*good and evil*, coexisting eternally and forever struggling against each other) is of pagan origin. It is not a Bible truth. It was “In the beginning GOD” alone; it was not “In the beginning God and Satan” or “In the beginning God and evil coexisted.”

Satan was not created a “devil.” Like Adam, Satan fell, **demonstrating** that none can stand, not even the cherubim around God’s eternal throne, without the sustaining grace of God keeping them.

In some way Satan was a sinner from the beginning of time, from the beginning of the material creation described in Genesis 1.1. God created the heavens first, then the earth, and respectively populated them in that order—first the heavens were created and populated with spirit-beings (angels, archangels, cherubs, seraphs, principalities, powers, and no one knows what other higher-order created beings there might be), and then the earth: “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them (Genesis 2.1).”

By the time the earth was created, Satan was apparently already a fallen sinner in rebellion against God: “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. **He was a murderer from the beginning**, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it (John 8.44).” You will note the language *abode not in the truth* indicates Satan was once “in” the truth but he did not stay (abide) there. He fell. Of this “anointed cherub that covereth” (an exact parallel to the cherubim over the mercy seat, itself a picture of God’s throne) it is said: “Thou wast **perfect** in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, **till** iniquity was found in thee (Ezekiel 28.15).”

In God’s eternal purpose, Satan was ready to attack God’s material creation from the time it was created.

We had occasion above to refer to “the works of the devil,” which Christ Jesus the Lord was manifest to destroy. The works of fallen man were predestinated to follow after the works of the devil. Depraved man cannot do otherwise. That is part of the eternal fixedness of God’s purpose and decrees. “For the creature [creation] was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope...(Romans 8.20).” The entire creation from Genesis 1.1 to the end of Revelation is one vast proof that saints and angels are totally dependent upon God’s sustaining grace. As Satan proved, not even a cherub closest to God’s throne can keep himself. “How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?” (Job 15.16).

In the final judgment of the devil, who is named Lucifer and Satan, God’s wisdom, holiness, righteous-

ness, justice, and wrath against all sin and reprobated sinners will be fully manifested and vindicated. Those men “ordained to this condemnation” will follow Satan into the lake of fire, where “the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night (Revelation 14.11),” showing God’s holiness, righteousness, and justice.

Note that “day and night” continue “for ever and ever [Greek, *eis aionas aionon*, to the ages of the ages].” In the original languages, God means what He says and says what He means. Do not play word-games with Scripture trying to make *for ever and ever* or *day and night* mean something other than exactly what the Book says.

God told Adam, “...**cursed is the ground** for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; **thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee**; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return (Genesis 3.17ff).” To destroy the works of the devil, He must deliver all creation from the curse placed upon it because of sin (see Revelation 22.3).

“But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God **ordained** before the world [*aionon*, *ages*, plural] unto our glory (1 Corinthians 2.7).” This text again carries our understanding back to before ages or time began—i.e., into eternity. **Ordained** in this text is “**preordained**,” [Greek, *proorisen*] or as we would say it, *predestinated*. It is so translated—predestinate or predestinated—in Romans 8.29, 30, and in Ephesians 1.5 and 11. “Determined before” rightly should be “predestinated” in Acts 4.28. Here in 1 Corinthians 2.7 Paul says, “...we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God **predestinated** before the ages unto our glory.”

If the **hidden wisdom of God** in His predestinated purpose in all things were not a mystery to us fallen and depraved creatures, if mankind could understand God by human logic and reason, there would be no need for divine revelation; but we know this is not the case.

Nor did the three-in-one God purpose His decree as an afterthought, some time after time began, or after Satan’s deception of Eve and Adam’s transgression in Genesis 3; nor for that matter did God begin purposing *after* the creation described in Genesis 1.1 and following. God has an **eternal purpose** in Christ, and that purpose entails the existence of Satan and his works in order for Christ to destroy both him and them.

“...*the devil sinneth from the beginning*: (1 John 3.8).” As before stated, the angels preexisted the material creation even as the heaven preceded the earth. God created the heaven and populated it with the angelic orders; He then created the earth and populated it with all its orders:

“Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?” (Job 38.4-7).

From ancient times until around the 600s AD, the saints of the Old Testament and those of the early church (for six centuries) understood “the sons of God” in this text (and in Genesis 6.2-4, Job 1.6, 2.1, and 38.7) to be the angelic hosts. The New Testament references to the sons of God (John 1.12, Romans 8.14-19, Philippians 2.15, 1 John 3.1-2) were uniformly understood to be God’s saints born from above into the kingdom of God. Only after the 600s AD, when the allegorical errors of Origen, the Gnostics, and Augustine had taken root and begun to flourish in the state “church,” did the “interpretation” of the Old Testament “sons of God” begin to be “interpreted” as God’s earthly elect from among mankind. The introduction of this new “interpretation” led to two major heretical doctrines: (a) that the saints eternally existed prior to creation, and (b) that saints *become* angels when they are transported to heaven.

C. Eternal, personal election of a fixed number: “The eternal personal election of the re-deemed in Christ, before the world began”

“I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him (Ecclesiastes 3.14).” There is an elect number, fixed; it is the number of God’s elect. God has fixed it by decree; it shall be for ever, and nothing can be put to it or taken from it—if it could, the number would obviously have to be larger or smaller than it is.

This principle is illustrated in many ways throughout the Bible. “But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace (Romans 11.4f).” It was not merely

“lots and lots of people” or “thousands of people,” but God had reserved to Himself exactly seven thousand men, no more and no less. Likewise, in Revelation 7, the Lord has His angels seal exactly one hundred and forty-four thousand servants, exactly twelve thousand out of each of the twelve tribes of Israel. If these numbers were left up to men, it would be a most amazing coincidence indeed! But as it was of God’s sovereign election, the fixedness of these numbers is not at all surprising.

Abraham’s Seed According to Promise

This principle includes not only God’s elect among the Gentile nations, but also the call of Abraham and his seed, his national descendants through Isaac, Jacob, and Jacob’s twelve sons. By man’s reckoning, God has long since forgotten about His promises to national Israel and gone away, leaving them behind for other things.

By God’s reckoning, however, as Peter by inspiration gives it (2 Peter 3.8), it has been scarcely **four days** since He called Abraham and gave him the promises. What?! Cannot we, by a God-given faith in the unchanging Jehovah, wait with Him less than a week, as He unfolds and displays His eternal purpose?

Will the Lord cast off for ever?

“Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will He be favourable no more? Is His mercy clean gone for ever? doth His promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath He in anger shut up His tender mercies? Selah (Psalm 77.7-9).” It is said that “Selah” means to pause and reflect upon what has gone before. These are solemn questions! Think about it:

Will the Lord indeed cast off for ever? Has He done so with national Israel? The Arminian mentality says, “Yes! He has cast them off for ever, because they were disobedient to His laws and they delivered their Messiah to Pilate for killing. Therefore, He will be favorable to them no more; His mercy is clean gone for ever.”

...doth His promise fail for evermore? Can any one of His promises fail, “when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee (Hebrews 6.13f)”? Is that promise now to be watered down and given away to the Gentiles? Cannot the God who chose the nation of Israel deliver them from their blindness, saving them as a nation?

“Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things [His counsel and His oath], in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us (Hebrews 6.17-18).” Those who say God will not keep His promises to Abraham, little do they realize they are undercutting their own hope; for, if God could break His covenant promise to Abraham, pray tell what could keep Him from breaking the promises in which we hope? If “the law of the Medes and Persians...altereth not,” then is the Medo-Persian law more inflexible than the word of Jehovah on oath?

As it is stated in countless confessions of faith, this number is “fixed, certain, and sure, and can neither be increased nor diminished.” Only God knows how many saints there will be to enjoy worshiping in His presence in eternity. It is far, far more than anyone can presently imagine, because it extends into eternity itself. The Lord fixed the number of His elect company in eternity, in the everlasting covenant that was King David’s hope on his dying bed: *“The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And He shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain. Although my house be not so with God; yet He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although He make it not to grow (2 Samuel 23.3-5).”*

Those whom God has given to see the truth of His sovereign grace generally regard the “it” that God does not make to grow to be

(a) David’s “house,” to which he refers, including “The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne (Psalm 132.11),” and “And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him **the throne of his father David**: and he shall reign over **the house of Jacob for ever**; and of his kingdom there shall be no end (Luke 1.31ff).” Through the prophecy regarding David’s house, the complete fulfillment will be

(b) the house of Christ Jesus our Lord, who is the fulfillment of all the promises made to David, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob/Israel; as the house of the Lord, this embraces all of **the household of faith** (Galatians 6.10); and,

(c) the everlasting covenant itself, which does not “grow” or change because it is ordered in all things and sure (unlike man’s changeable covenants that grow and are adjusted and amended continually); it needs no amendments or changes because it is perfect and was perfect in eternity.

Shortsighted men think “the church age,” is the Grand Ultimate, and it doesn’t get any better than this! After this, they suppose, there will be no other ages other than “the eternal state,” whatever that might be. Oh, that God would give us to see more of His eternal plan for the ages of the ages!

Men have thought that this fixed number of God’s saints primarily refers to the church as we know it. In a sense that might well be so, *if* we are given to remember that it also refers to the saints from Adam and Eve on, God’s Old Testament “church” (Acts 7.38), all the elect of God in every age, including “*the ages* [plural] *to come* (Ephesians 2.7).” Therefore, the number will include the elect among national Israel who will be converted by the appearing of their Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ; and it will include whoever else is embraced in God’s election within **the ages to come** after the end of this “present world [*eon, age*] (Titus 2.12).” “Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages [Greek, *genea*, elsewhere translated in the KJV as *generation, nation, time*], world [*eons, ages*] without end. Amen (Ephesians 3.21).” Unto God, then, Paul is saying, be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all generations in unending ages.

There is far more involved in God’s fixing numbers than just the number of His elect. He has even decreed the number of martyrs yet to die before this age is over. John described those martyrs, who had already died at the time when he saw the Revelation, as follows:

“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).”

What these martyred saints, seen at the foot of the altar of incense, were told was that, before the Lord would avenge their blood on the earth-dwellers, they must wait until their fellow-servants and brethren, who are about to be killed, should **fill up** (for that is what “fulfilled” means) **the appointed number**. The word means *full number, full content, entire contents, or full measure*. There is an exact number of saints to be martyred. He is saying, in plain language, the Lord will not avenge the blood of *some* of His martyrs until *all* the martyrs yet to die—the full, exact, ordained number—have been killed. Only then will He avenge them, and He will avenge all of them at the same time.

In sum, the number of God’s elect people, redeemed by the blood of Christ, “out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation,” is far greater than we mere mortals can ever count or imagine; but God, who knoweth all things (1 John 3.20), knows them all, including those to come in future eons. He knows them not merely by “simple foreknowledge” or foresight, but because He has decreed whom He would save in Christ. “Nevertheless **the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His**. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity (2 Timothy 2.19).”

D. Vital union of Christ and His people

By man’s carnal reasoning, manifest never more plainly than in Arminianism, men read of being “in Christ” and reason that if mankind fell in Adam, then they must somehow get themselves from their fallen state “into Christ.” In the mind and purpose of God, however, there never was a time when His people were viewed as being separate from Christ. They were chosen in Him before the world began (Ephesians 1.4) and do not need to “get into” Him.

“...the power of *God; Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began...*(2 Timothy 1.9).” Two things are here before us: (a) He saved us according to His own **purpose**, and (b) His **grace** was given us *in Christ Jesus before*

the world began. The elect have eternally been represented by Him.

“*In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began* (Titus 1.2)”: Were you there, before the world began, to receive the promise of eternal life? No. Only God alone was present when He counseled and covenanted with Himself. Christ was there, representing His people, to receive that promise for them. That is part of the eternal covenant, God’s eternal counsel.

“For He said, *Surely they are my people*, children that will not lie: so He **was** their Saviour. In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and *He bare them, and carried them all the days of old* (Isaiah 63.8f).” He **WAS** their Savior. Not that He *came to be*, or to *become*, their Savior. He eternally already **WAS** their Savior, bearing their affliction, saving, loving, redeeming them, bearing and carrying them “**ALL** the days of old,” that is, eternally, such that there never was a “time,” even in eternity, that He was not bearing them and carrying them.

2. REDEMPTION IN CHRIST: Christ’s redemption of His elect people; efficacious and effectual; Christ’s blood atonement (ransom); His Reconciliation of His people unto Himself (in and by Christ Jesus)

Redemption of the Land

Oddly enough, the first time the word redemption is used in the KJV, it refers not to people but to the land: “And in all the land of your possession ye shall grant a redemption for the land (Leviticus 25.24).” This is an early clue that Christ’s redemption includes both (a) **the Promised Land** that God gave to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and their descendants **forever**, and (b) the deliverance of **the material creation**, in accordance with Acts 3.21 and related passages, from the curse placed upon it in Genesis 3.17-18:

“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature [Greek, *ktisis, creation*] waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature [*ktisis, creation*] was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the

creature [*ktisis, creation*] itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation [*ktisis, creation*] groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body (Romans 8.18-23).”

The three uses of the word “creature” and the one use of “creation” in this text are all from the Greek word *ktisis*, or a form of it; and they all should be uniformly understood to be “the whole creation,” as it is rendered in its fourth occurrence. Others may determine why the word was not consistently translated by the KJV translators.

That Christ’s redemption includes the entire creation, including the earth and the material universe, is stated as plainly as it could be stated in the way Christ instructed His disciples to pray, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done **in earth, as it is in heaven** (Matthew 6.10),” a text much abused by those who love to “spiritualize” every text they can. This is such an important point that, rather than digress here, the subject will be addressed in an article elsewhere (page 12) in this issue.

A. Christ’s redemption of His elect people

Redemption is **deliverance by ransom**, that is, deliverance by paying a required price in order to acquire the release of whatever or whoever is being ransomed and redeemed. **REDEMPTION** is someone actually taking unto himself what he has purchased.

Do not confuse redemption with ransom. Ransom is the price paid; redemption is the result. To be a successful ransom, the prisoner must actually be delivered; he has been **bought** back, but now he must be **brought** back, released from the hand of the enemy and delivered safely into the hand of his Redeemer.

—C. C. Morris

(To be continued, if the Lord has so willed)

He sent redemption unto His people: He hath commanded His **covenant** for ever: holy and reverend is **HIS** name.—Psalm 111.9

A QUESTION FROM THE PHILIPPINES ON TITHES AND OFFERINGS

Dear Elder Morris, I am interested to learn about the Biblical way of giving, the decree of God. Is there any other form of giving aside from what our Pastor taught us about the tithes and offering. There are many other offerings Pastors here are mentioning like firstfruit offering, love offering, sacrificial offering etc. I am a little bit confused and I want to learn more truths, not just in giving but I also want to give time studying absolute predestination and preservation and perseverance of the saints. I want to learn more truths, not just in giving but I also want to give time studying absolute predestination and preservation and perseverance of the saints.

Reply: A few Primitive Baptists tithe privately and voluntarily. There is nothing wrong with that. There is scriptural precedent: Abram and others tithed centuries before the law of Moses. It is a matter between the individual and his or her God. It is not something between a person and his pastor or church. **However, no Old School Primitive Baptist I know of advocates tithing as a New Testament practice.** It is generally understood among them that all gifts are to be given out of love and gratitude to God: Jesus said, “Freely ye have received, freely give (Matthew 10.8).” In other words, if you have received a hope in the grace, love, and mercy of God, you will want to share whatever you have been given. As far as Old School Baptists are concerned, how, when, how much, and how often one gives is left between the individual and the Lord.

I do not know who your pastor is, but it sounds as if he may be a “teacher of the law” (1 Timothy 1.7): **“Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.”** I do not want to judge him or accuse him of anything bad, but he may be one who is simply trying to get more money for himself. As I said, no Old School Primitive Baptist I know of advocates tithing, but the one you speak of evidently teaches tithing and a lot of other offerings (**firstfruit offering, love offering, sacrificial offering etc.**) for which he has neither scriptural basis or authority.

1. **The firstfruit offering** was the first sheaf of grain harvested each year in Israel before the main crop

was allowed to be harvested. This first sheaf was to be brought to the priest who presented (waved) it before the Lord (Leviticus 23.9-14). This waving of the sheaf in the presence of God in His tabernacle was in thankful acknowledgement that the blessings of the grain harvest had been sent by God for another year. Israel was not allowed to reap their entire crop until this wave offering ceremony was completed.

The **firstfruit offering** was typical; it was fulfilled in Christ’s resurrection: “But now is **Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits** of them that slept.” Christ referred to Himself as a “corn [kernel] of wheat” in John 12.24—but a kernel is not a sheaf. He was indeed the firstfruit from among the dead, but the firstfruit sheaf consisted of the saints who rose immediately after His resurrection. “And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves **after his resurrection**, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many (Matthew 27.52f).” They could not rise before Him, or even with Him, because in all things, including the resurrection, He must have the preeminence. “And He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence (Colossians 1.18).”

These resurrected saints who came forth after His resurrection constituted the wave sheaf, presented to God the Father by Christ as His people’s Priest, as a token-pledge of the yet-future complete resurrection-harvest, to be garnered at His second coming (Matthew 13.30): “Let both [wheat and tares] grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.”

Christ explained His own parable in this regard: “...the harvest is the end of the world [*eon, age*]; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world [*eon, age*]. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear (Matthew 13.39-43).”

“But every man in his own order: **Christ the firstfruits**; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming (1 Corinthians 15.20-23).” Also, the first converts in a new area were considered the firstfruits of that area: “Salute my wellbeloved Epaphroditus, who is **the firstfruits of Achaia** unto Christ (Romans 16.5).” The early converts were considered the “firstfruits” of Achaia (or wherever else) in anticipation of a greater harvest yet to come in that region.

2. The Bible does not mention a “**love offering**” as such. ALL gifts should be given in a spirit of love, not because of duty or obligation. As far as I have ever been able to find out, this “**love offering**” is a term invented by money-grabbing Arminian preachers in an effort to encourage people to give more than the tithe. They usually present the tithe, which is 10%, in a legalistic manner. They in effect say, “The tithe is your obligation. To tithe is your duty and is not *giving* anything. Only when you give more than the tithe are you really *giving* anything. Give ‘love offerings’ too; that is, give more out of love to God.”

3. **Sacrificial offering** would mean a sacrifice, like in Old Testament sacrifices of lambs. Those bloody sacrifices were types or pictures showing the death of Christ Jesus for His people’s sins. We no longer offer our cattle, sheep, and other animals that way. The Lord Jesus Christ was and is **the Lamb of God** who fulfilled all that was typified by the bloody sacrifices. There are no more sacrificial offerings like that now. Even the Jews do not practice them.

I know of some Arminian preachers who say we must now “sacrifice our time and money” to help the cause of Christ, the church, or the spread of the gospel. They say this is a **sacrificial offering** because we make “a personal sacrifice” by taking time or money that we might spend on ourselves or on our family and giving it to the church. The Bible nowhere teaches this at all. Our Guide is the Lord Jesus Christ who, as quoted above, told His people, “Freely ye have received, freely give.”

On the same day you sent your question to me, I found an article about “**New Testament Giving**” that Elder Mike McInnis had written and posted on his web site (Blog) **last December** (2006). Please go to his site at <http://wayfarerblog.blogspot.com/> and see if what he says there will help answer your questions.

We believe all things that happen are predestinated. Some would say that my finding Elder McInnis’

article was “just a coincidence.” Personally, I believe it was another example of those “all things” that are ordered in all things and sure, things that work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. As of today, as I write this in early June, 2007, Elder McInnis has evidently not added anything else to his web site since last December. The only article there (other than an introductory paragraph last November) is his writing on “New Testament Giving.” Mordecai told queen Esther, “Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” To paraphrase Mordecai, “Who knows whether Elder McInnis’ article was posted, in and by God’s providence, for your help and understanding for such a time as this?”

You also mentioned “**preservation and perseverance of the saints**.” I know that the Conditionalists are now challenging the historic doctrine of God’s **preservation of the saints** and teaching that God’s children must *persevere*, and they are teaching that it is “up to you” whether you do or not. There is not a bit of difference between modern conditionalism and John Wesley’s free-will Methodism.

For now I will only say this about that: If you are one of God’s children, you **WILL PERSEVERE BECAUSE GOD PRESERVES YOU**.

Again Jesus said, “**My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand** (John 10.27-29).” There are no conditions to meet, no works required. The Lord has saved His people and announced “It is finished.” He has sent His Holy Spirit to quicken His people and give them the fruit of His Spirit. If any man tells you that ANY part of your salvation is still “up to you,” he is a liar, because by his false free-will doctrine he would make God Himself to be a liar if it were possible; because as a puny man he pits himself against the Lord Jesus Christ, both in what Christ *said* and in what He *did* to secure and apply so great salvation to His people.

I hope that by the grace of our Lord these comments have been of some help and guidance to you.

Thank you for writing. May the Lord bless you and your family.

—C. C. Morris

IN EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.—Matthew 6.10

Man, whose Hebrew name is 'Adam, was made of the dust of the ground. In Hebrew, "ground" is 'adamah, from whence comes Adam's name. That is not all we get from that word. In the King James Version, 'adamah is also rendered **country, earth, and land**, among other things.

Adam was made out of the same dirt that the earth, countries, and lands are made.

Bible interpretation is **not** a two-way street. *Man* is made of *dirt*, but **not all dirt is man**. Some dirt is just plain **dirt**, and sometimes the earth is *the earth*.

All too often, whenever **the earth** is mentioned, those who seize every opportunity to "spiritualize" a text assume "the earth" always refers to this "earthly tabernacle," meaning the human body. (The phrase "earthly tabernacle" does not occur in the Bible. Paul refers to "our earthly house of this tabernacle.")

They tell us that since man was made from the dust of the ground, then in Matthew 6.10 "in earth" means "in this old fleshly body...." Therefore, they say, Jesus was teaching His disciples to pray, "Thy will be done in this old fleshly body as Thy will is done in heaven."

That might make good human logic, except for the fact that it is built on a faulty premise. Those who take this approach overlook the fact that sometimes "earth" simply means *earth*, this terrestrial globe on which we live. Such is the case in this text.

Further, Scripture does not support such reasoning.

First: The phrase "in earth" in the New Testament Greek is "*epi tes ges*," "upon the earth."

English	Greek
In heaven	<i>en ourano</i>
On, upon	<i>epi</i>
The	<i>tes</i>
Earth	<i>ge, ges</i>

As they say, "The Greeks had a word for it"—in this case, a word for **IN**, as in "*in* heaven." If the Lord had meant "IN earth," He would have said "*en tes ges*," not "*epi tes ges*," meaning "**on** the earth," as He did.

Some authorities question whether *tes* (the) is in the original text or not, but there is no doubt that *epi* (on, upon) and *ges* (a form of *ge*, earth) were used. Whether

"on earth" or "on *the* earth," it is definitely not "**in** earth" and not "**in the** earth."

Why the Inconsistency?

I will say I am in sympathy with those who see "in earth" as meaning in the earthly bodies of God's born-again children. That is entirely true, as far as it goes, that God's will shall be done in His people, because "it is God which worketh **in you** both to will and to **do of his good pleasure** (Philippians 2.13)."

But that is not what Christ was talking about in Matthew 6.10. He was speaking of God the Father's will being done **on** the *ge*-ography of this planet, which is something entirely different. Moreover, even when God is working His will **in the earthly bodies** of His people "to will and to do of His good pleasure," His will is still being done **ON EARTH**.

Some try to make these words mean something other than **the earth** as Christ spoke of it. They who dote on "spiritualizing" the earth in this text, might explain why they are so adamant that (a) the word **IN** *must* absolutely mean **IN** and cannot be changed, but (b) **earth** does **not** mean **earth!** To them, it does not mean **on** the earth; it has to mean **in** the earth; but earth is not the earth! **Are we clear on this?** They *insist*, it is not **ON** the earth; it *must* be **IN** the earth—but then they tell us *the earth* is not really **the earth**; it surely is spiritually figurative language for "this old body." It cannot really mean this dirt-ball we live on.

Why are we presented with this inconsistency?

Again. The exact same phrase occurs just nine verses later: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures **upon earth** [*epi tes ges*"], where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal (Matthew 6.19)." For our friends to be consistent, we would expect them to say verse 19 really means, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures **in this old fleshly body**, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through...." (Yes, there are some who say *that, too!*)

About Idioms....

When Christ's words in this text were given to us as "in earth," the English words are a rendering of a common Hebrew-Greek *idiom*. An *idiom* is a form of wording, often not literally translatable, that is peculiar to a particular language.

All languages have their own idioms. Have you seen someone "*fiddling* with a cell phone" lately? When we

“catch a ride” or “catch a cold,” we are not literally *catching* it with a hook, a noose, or a net. If a hobo “hops a freight” he doesn’t ordinarily do so by *hopping* alongside a boxcar on one foot (unless he is one-legged).

These are figures of speech peculiar to our language, idioms we all understand without thinking them through literally, but which make understanding the English language (especially the USA’s version) difficult for those not born and raised among us. It is the same in the languages in which the Bible was written.

In this text, our Lord was speaking of **on earth** in the same way Paul uses it in Philippians 2.10: “That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things **in heaven**, and things **on earth** (*epigeion*), and things **under the earth**; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2.10f).” We talk of living **in the earth** in the exact same sense as we say we live **in the world**. If “in earth” means like earthworms are literally **IN** the earth, as some men insist, then we must ask: What, then, does “*under* the earth” mean in Philippians 2.10—hanging from the South Pole at the earth’s bottom, like a pull-chain under a ceiling-light?

Why are spiritualizers so literal when they want to be, for their own, private, hidden reason, and then why do they roundly condemn literalism whenever being literal does not fit their hidden agenda? Perhaps this question contains its own answer.

“In earth” is an idiom simply meaning **on earth**, just like we say we live **in** this world. Idioms are confusing only to those who don’t know what an idiom is or how they are used.

Let us look at a few examples of this **idiom** from the Old Testament:

“And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl **multiply in the earth** (Genesis 1.22).” Do birds mate and nest underground?

“And God saw that the wickedness of man was great **in the earth**, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually (Genesis 6.5).” Does this mean *only in basements or cellars*?

“And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is **in the earth** shall die (Genesis 6.17).” Is this just earthworms, moles, groundhogs, and burrowing varmints?

“Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee, of all flesh, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth **upon the earth**; that they may breed abundantly **in the earth**, and be fruitful, and multiply **upon the earth** (Genesis 8.17).” Here **in** and **upon** are used interchangeably.

“And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly **in the earth**, and multiply therein (Genesis 9.7).”

“These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations: and by these were the nations divided **in the earth** after the flood (Genesis 10.32).”

Joseph told his brothers, “And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity **in the earth**, and to save your lives by a great deliverance (Genesis 45.7).”

“And what one nation **in the earth** is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to Himself, and to make Him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods?” (2 Samuel 7.23)

“And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro **in the earth**, and from walking up and down in it (Job 1.7).”

“And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him **in the earth**, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?” (Job 1.8 and 2.3). Satan was not “walking up and down in Job’s old fleshly body,” as some would have it, because Job’s fleshly body itself was **in the earth** where Satan had been walking up and down.

Psalms 119.19 says, “I am a stranger **in the earth**: hide not thy commandments from me.” Did the Psalmist mean he was *dead and buried in the earth* as he was writing this?

The next and last text we present here exactly defines what we are talking about:

“Also by watering He wearieth the thick cloud: He scattereth His bright cloud: and it is turned round about by His counsels: that they may do whatsoever He commandeth them **upon the face of the world in the earth** (Job 37.12).”

In this text, “**Upon the face of the world**” **EQUALS “in the earth.”**

There are a few times, by the way, that “in the earth” actually does mean *in the earth*: “When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid **in the earth** in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it (Joshua 7.21).” Achan had buried the stolen goods. “Though the root [of a tree] thereof wax old **in the earth**, and the stock thereof die in the ground...(Job 14.8)” explains itself.

Second: In Matthew 6.10, the word Christ used for *earth* is *ges*, a form of the Greek word *ge*, the root word from which we get words like *geography* and *geophysics*. Strong’s Concordance’s Dictionary says *ge* means

soil; by extension a region, or the solid part or the whole of the terrene globe. In the New Testament it is variously rendered “country, earth, earthly, ground, land, world.”

That does not furnish a good start for “spiritualizing” the *earth* in this text.

Does a person live “in” the USA or “on” the USA? Does he live “in” Chicago or “on” Chicago? Does living in Chicago mean he lives inside (under) or enclosed in Chicago’s dirt like an earthworm, under the dirt in Chicago? If not, must we say someone lives “on” Chicago because he lives on the topside of the soil? Of course not.

We might rightfully paraphrase Matthew 6.10 by saying, “Thy will be done **in Chicago** as it is in heaven,” or, “Thy will be done **in Europe** as it is in heaven.” We have far more of a right to do so than we do to say the Lord *meant*, “Thy will be done *in this old body* as it is in heaven,” because, at least “**in Chicago**” and “**in Europe**” fit the idiom, **on** or **in the earth**.

Third, His instructing them to pray, “**Thy kingdom come**. Thy will be done **on** earth, as it is in heaven” indicates exactly what He meant by the entire verse.

We know that His eternal kingdom is here now, and it has always been so. That fact is not disputed at all. Nebuchadnezzar said, “...I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured Him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is *an everlasting dominion*, and *His kingdom is from generation to generation* (Daniel 4.34).” Since

Christ’s dominion or kingdom is everlasting, from generation to generation, and it was present in Nebuchadnezzar’s day, then it was also present in Christ’s day, and without controversy it is present in our day. Then in what sense did John mean the kingdom of Heaven was “at hand” in Matthew 3.2? In what sense did Jesus mean the kingdom of heaven was “at hand” in Matthew 4.17, since it was already present? In what sense did He tell them to pray “Thy kingdom come” when it was already here?

“At hand” (“The kingdom of heaven is at hand”) is an idiom, as are “I have it at my fingertips,” “He is right at my elbow,” and “It’s right on the tip of my tongue.” Strong says the word translated “at hand” means “to make near, approach.” The kingdom of heaven was made near, approaching. Again, how could this be, if the kingdom of heaven was already here (and it was), always had been (and it had), and always will be (and it shall)?

Before we address that question, we must remember: The Jews to whom John and Jesus spoke had no problem knowing what “the kingdom of heaven is at hand” meant. For centuries they had been desirous of the coming Deliverer who would reestablish the kingdom of David according to God’s promises. There were some in that day, like Simeon and Anna, who were “waiting for the consolation of Israel.” Anna spoke “of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem,” so there must have been some who “looked for redemption in Jerusalem” for Anna to speak to about these things. In Israel and Judea, there was a remnant of God’s saints looking for His first coming, even as there are some among His saints who are now looking for His second coming.

What was the “consolation of Israel” Simeon waited for? The angel Gabriel’s word to Mary is significant. To announce the coming birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, he told Mary:

“Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and [a] **the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David**: and [b] **He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever**; and [c] **of His kingdom there shall be no end** (Luke 1.30ff).”

This may come as a surprise to some, but Christ has never yet occupied **the throne of His father David**, which is the throne of His glory (Matthew 19.28, 25.31), but He shall: “Therefore [David] being a prophet, and knowing that **God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his [David’s] throne;**(Acts 2.30).” *Spiritualizing won’t do.* The promise of God on His oath to David was **according to the flesh**, something **spiritual**-izers can scarcely fathom. “The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, **UNTIL** I make thy foes thy footstool (Acts 2.34f).”

A Digression That Is Not a Digression

“But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all (1 Corinthians 15. 23-28).” A digression on this text would fill many pages, if the Lord so blessed us. For now we will make only a few comments and ask a few questions:

1. “They that are Christ’s at His coming” (in verse 23) will be resurrected then, for the resurrection is the subject of 1 Corinthians, chapter 15. The resurrection’s occurring at Christ’s second advent is the uniform teaching of the Scriptures, which is exactly what Paul is talking about in these verses. These resurrected saints are associated not with the kingdom of heaven, but with the kingdom of **God** (“**when** he shall have delivered up the **kingdom to God,**” verse 24), which kingdom Christ said no one can see or enter unless he is born from above (John 3.3-5).

2. No one I know of denies Christ is ruling over both the kingdom of God—His born-again ones—and also the kingdom of heaven; *least of all those multitudes who think the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven are the same thing.*

3. Nor do I deny He rules in both of those kingdoms. Rather, He perpetually rules and reigns in both. For the

record, they *are* different kingdoms, and He rules and reigns over them both, both now and forever. Certainly God in Christ now rules over the flesh and the earth every bit as much as He rules over the spirit and heaven.

4. Now, is His ruling over His elect (the kingdom of God, those who are born again or born from above), is His ruling over them what is meant by His “putting down ALL rule and ALL authority and power,” or is there yet some more rule, authority, and power that is not included in His people, yet to be subdued to Him?

5. Are His enemies **ONLY** in the kingdom of God, (those who must be born of water and of the Spirit to see and enter into it), or do they reside in *another* kingdom besides the kingdom of God (say the kingdom of heaven)? Or are His enemies, and “all rule and all authority and power” and **even death itself** outside of any domain of Christ’s rule?

6. Are not His enemies in **the kingdom of heaven** (as He said in Matthew 13) along with the bad ground, the bad birds, the tares, the leaven, and the bad fish?

7. All things must be brought together at the end of things as we now know them for a grand culmination, a climax; and that is exactly what Paul is talking about here: “For He must reign **till** He hath put ALL enemies under His feet,” not just His “born-again” enemies (Romans 5.10). Is **Death** (the last enemy to be destroyed) in the kingdom of God? If so, Death is no doubt born of water and of the Spirit, the only way to have entered the kingdom of God. Or is death **not** in the kingdom of heaven? Where is **Death**? Is Death in the kingdom of God, or the kingdom of heaven, or both, or neither?

Back to Where Christ Is Seated

But to return to where Christ is seated: It is not on the throne of HIS glory. Presently He is seated —

—on His Father’s throne, which is entirely different from His own “throne of His glory.” “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and **am set down with my Father in His throne** (Revelation 3.21).” “And she brought forth a man child [the Lord Jesus Christ, not the emperor *Constantine!*], who was **to rule all nations with a rod of iron:** and her child was caught up unto **God, and to His throne.**”—Revelation 12.5.)

—At the right hand of the Majesty on High, His Father: “...when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down **on the right hand of the Majesty on high...** (Hebrews 1.3).

Matthew's Account

We do the Bible, its divine Author, and ourselves a great disservice by reading it disjointedly. Matthew's chapters 3 through 7 (and what precedes and follows them) all go together. John's announcing, "Repent ye: for **the kingdom of heaven** is at hand" in chapter 3, and Jesus' announcing in chapter 4, "Repent: for **the kingdom of heaven** is at hand" cannot be divorced from the sermon that follows. Rather, the earlier chapters "set the stage" (an idiom) for Christ's "*Sermon on the Mount*" in chapters 5-7. There, in that sermon, He announced, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is **the kingdom of heaven**," "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is **the kingdom of heaven**," "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in **the kingdom of heaven**: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in **the kingdom of heaven**. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into **the kingdom of heaven**," "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into **the kingdom of heaven**; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven," and in the middle of all these pronouncements He taught them to pray, "**Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.**"

In what sense are His people to pray **Thy kingdom come** other than in a *manifest* sense, when His will shall be done, yea, enforced with His rod of iron, **on earth, including in Chicago and in Europe, as it is in heaven**, when "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea (Isaiah 11.9)"?

God's Sovereignty and This Prayer

God's sovereignty is not the complete explanation of God's will being done "on earth." In God's sovereignty, **all things**, including the wicked, are here for some good and wise end and are in accord with His will. "The LORD hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil (Proverbs 16.4)."

There is not one detail that He could not change if He so desired: "But He is in one mind, and who can turn Him? and what His soul desireth, even that He doeth. For He performeth the thing that is appointed for me: and many such things are with Him. Therefore

am I troubled at His presence: when I consider, I am afraid of Him (Job 23.13ff)."

Every sin that ever takes place is here for (at least) one exact reason (among others): "...every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward (Hebrews 2.2)." As a sin is predestinated, so its just recompense is also predestinated. If it is a sin of one of His elect, its just recompense fell on Christ who bore the reproaches of His people, to the praise of His love, grace, and mercy. If it is a sin of a reprobate, its just recompense will be manifested in God's wrath falling upon the reprobate, to the praise of God's holiness, righteousness, and justice. Therefore we can rightly say that in that sense God's will *is* now done in or on earth. Before it is all over, everyone—saints and sinners, angels and demons—will see this fact manifested as the truth of the eternal God.

That, however, is not why anyone is to pray this prayer; God's providential sovereignty over sin is true whether anyone prays for it or not!

The disciples were bid to pray for **His kingdom to come in such a manifest way that God's will shall be done on earth even as it is in heaven**, a place where there is no sin or unrighteousness. In such an earthly environment there will be nothing but holiness and righteousness beyond compare or imagination.

"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)." One might think from this verse that even God's children—"them that love Him" (Romans 8.28)—have never seen, heard, or even contemplated in their hearts what God hath prepared for them, and they won't in this life. Does this text mean the eternal state of glory is entirely unknowable in this life? One might think so if he stops reading there.

There are **two clues** that prove that such a premature conclusion is wrong:

1. **The verses that follow:** "*But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not*

in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual (verses 10-13).” Here we are given to see (a) God hath revealed them to us by His Spirit, which His people have received by birth—the spiritual “new” birth, making them partakers of the divine nature; in order that (b) we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Paul says, (c) “Which things also we speak,” the *we* being himself, his traveling companions (Luke, Timothy, Silas, *et al*), as well as all the other apostles and writers of the New Testament. So we also have the New Testament writers to tell us the things that are freely given to us of God, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. “Comparing spiritual things with spiritual” is generally understood to mean comparing Scriptures with other Scriptures, because none of them are of a private or isolated interpretation (in other words, you cannot rightfully build a doctrine on any one verse). And that brings us to:

2. “**But as it is written**”: With these words, Paul introduces verse 9. When it comes to Bible “commentaries,” one will find (with the light and leadership of the Holy Spirit) the Scriptures themselves are their own best commentary on themselves. When an Old Testament text is quoted in the New Testament, one will find much additional light on its use and meaning by examining the Old Testament text in its context. To do so here, we look at Isaiah 64.4, the verse Paul quotes in verse 9. Isaiah 64.4 says, “*For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.*” If God be pleased to grant it, we can get an idea of what both Isaiah’s and Paul’s subject is by examining this text, and what is said before and after it, in the light of God’s Spirit.

(a) First, Paul did not quote the part that says, “*For since the beginning of the world,*” but it is there. “The beginning of the world” is from only one Hebrew word, *owlam*, a Hebrew **idiom** meaning the vanishing point; i.e., eternity. So already we have a reference to God’s eternal purpose, predestination, and will.

(b) Isaiah says, “*...neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee....*”: Paul elaborates, “*the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received...the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of*

God....” Of what in particular, then, and of when, is God speaking by His prophet Isaiah **and** His apostle Paul? Begin at verse 1 of Isaiah 64:

(c) “*Oh that thou wouldst rend the heavens, that thou wouldst come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence. As when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence! When thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at thy presence* (verses 1-3)”: So this passage has to do with God’s “rending the heavens,” and His “coming down”—at Christ’s second advent. His rending the heavens, His coming down, the “flowing down of the mountains at His presence” (twice mentioned), the melting fire burning, the fire causing the waters to boil, His making His NAME known to His adversaries (remember 1 Corinthians 15.25?), the nations trembling at His presence; these are **all** events associated with the battle of Armageddon, and before, during, and after it.

Objection: *Verse 3 is in the past tense; these things must have already happened.*

Reply: They are spoken in the prophetic past, as is often the case, **as though** they are being looked back on from a yet-future time after they had already happened; even as the prophet wrote, “He **was wounded** for our transgressions, He **was bruised** for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace **was upon Him, etc.**,” around seven centuries before these things actually occurred in time. These were prophecies of the future, spoken as though they were already past.

Who is better qualified to teach His children than the Holy Spirit who inspired the Scriptures, who Christ said would take the things pertaining to Him and show them to His people? “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you (John 14.26).” “He shall glorify me: for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you (John 16.14).”

Idioms are part of our heritage from the tower of Babel. Let’s not add to the confusion by trying to make the Bible say something it doesn’t! When Christ said, “*Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in [or on] earth, as it is in heaven,*” He meant exactly what the simple, straightforward use of those words mean. —CCM

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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;

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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.