



Seek The Old Paths

“Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths. . . and walk therein”
(Jeremiah 6:16)

Vol. 29, No. 12

December 2018

PICK A SIDE — YOU CAN'T BE NEUTRAL!

Rusty Stark

Jesus was a very polarizing preacher. He was constantly dividing his audience and the whole world into two categories.

Someone once objected that we were preaching too much about the Holy Spirit. The objection was not that other doctrines were being ignored. He did not say we needed a better balance. Objections like those, if true, would have been legitimate. His reason for recommending that we teach less on the Holy Spirit was this: This teaching is so “polarizing.” I knew there were some in the congregation with false ideas and beliefs about the Holy Spirit. I was trying to win them over to the truth. But this man saw the teaching of the truth as divisive — polarizing. Forgive me, but I thought that was the point. We teach the truth to try to convince men, to convict men, to educate their minds, alter their beliefs, and change their lives and destiny.

Jesus was a very polarizing preacher. He was constantly dividing his audience and the whole world into two categories. Some (few) will accept the truth and some (many) will not (cf. Matt. 22:14). This process is polarizing. It calls on men and women to make a choice, pick a side. Consider these great, simple, but demanding verses:

- In Exodus 32:26 Moses asked, “Who is on the Lord’s side?”
- In Joshua 24:15 Joshua said, “Choose you this day whom ye will serve.”
- In 1 Kings 18:21 Elijah asked, “How long halt ye between two

opinions?” These questions are God’s questions.

They are polarizing. They demand that people make a choice. They call upon everyone to “pick a side.” Should we not follow this example? Yes, we must if we are going to meet with God’s approval.

- Matthew 7:13-14, “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” There are only two ways before humanity. One leads to life, the other leads to destruction. Everyone is traveling one path or the other. The point is, Choose a Road — Eternal Life (salvation) or Eternal Destruction (damnation).
- Matthew 7:24-28, “Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and

the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it. And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine.” Everyone has a choice to make — Wise or Foolish? We can build on the foundation of the words of Jesus, or we can build on the sand? The point is, Build (stand) on the Rock of Truth or Build (collapse) on the Shifting Sands of Error.

- Matthew 12:30, “He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.” Everyone must Choose, Pick a Side. You can’t be neutral. This kind of preaching demands a decision. Choose. Whose side are you on? It calls on men to carry (bear) a cross, make a commitment. The point is, Forsake All and Follow Jesus Christ the Savior or Tear Down and Scatter all that is Good and Right and Holy.
- John 3:19-21, “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov’d. But he that doeth truth cometh to the

(Continued on page 95)
Pick A Side...



Editorial...

A BODILESS SPIRIT?

Garland M. Robinson

“Nobody wants to be a bodiless spirit floating around on a cloud somewhere.”

This article is examining the so-called “heaven on earth” — “renewed earth” doctrine. It teaches that:

1) At the Lord’s second coming the earth will not be burned up, dissolved, melted, and pass away like 2 Peter 3:7-12 says. Instead, it will be renovated and renewed much like the Jehovah’s Witness cult teaches.

2) Heaven above where God, Christ, the Holy Spirit and an innumerable company of heavenly beings are right now will cease to exist. God’s dwelling place in heaven above will pass away instead of the earth passing away. This doctrine claims heaven will come down and be established on the renewed earth. God will come to us instead of us going to him!

On page 79 of Randy Alcorn’s book called *Heaven* we read that God “promises us a *New Earth*. ...It means that we can expect to find earthly things there — including atmosphere, mountains, water, trees, people, houses — even cities, buildings, and streets. ...In heaven we’ll rest, work.” He says we will “eat, walk, serve, work, laugh and play, why would we not sleep? ... I believe we will likely need it *and* enjoy it (p.330). We will “open our homes to guests” (p.335). “It’s not just people who will be renewed but also the earth and ‘all things’ in it. Do ‘all things’ include animals? Yes. Horses, cats, dogs, deer, dolphins, and squirrels — as well as the inanimate creation — will be beneficiaries of Christ’s death and resurrection” (p.397). He suggests that some animals that lived, suffered and died “...must be made whole on the New Earth. Wouldn’t some of those likely be our pets” (p.400)? People not only have cats and dogs as pets, some have spiders, lizards and snakes! Regarding our pets, Alcorn suggests “...We have biblical grounds for not only wanting but also expecting that we may be with

them again on the New Earth” (p.402).

For such a consequential and fatal doctrine to be devised requires a lot of imagination and the champions of this teaching not only admit it, they encourage it. Alcorn recommends to his readers “*the importance of using our imagination*” (p.16). The whole system of a renewed physical earth with God dwelling upon it for eternity is founded upon a very wild and vivid imagination. Since there is not one shred of Bible evidence to support the idea, the only place left to go is a mindset of delusion (a belief or altered reality that is persistently held despite evidence of agreement to the contrary). Do you wonder why they want us to use our imagination? It’s because there is no Scripture to support it. There is no “*thus saith the Lord*” when it comes to the “renewed earth” doctrine (cf. Exodus 4:22; 1 Kings 21:19; Isa. 28:16; Jer. 6:16).

To use your imagination requires you to “take from” and “add to” what God says. To do so is perverting the Gospel. God pronounces a curse upon those who pervert His Word. Some among the churches in Galatia had left the Gospel of Christ and embraced another gospel. “*Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed*” (Gal. 1:6-9). God forbids anyone altering His Holy Book (Deut. 4:2; Deut. 5:32; Prov. 30:6; Rev. 22:18-19).

A major point of the so-called “renewed heaven and earth” doctrine is that God will make our present physical, material, tangible bodies we have now into new physical, material, tan-

gible bodies to live on the New Earth. One expression frequently used in regard to heaven being on a physical earth is: “*Nobody wants to be a bodiless spirit floating around on a cloud somewhere.*” Where does the idea of being a “bodiless spirit” come from? Their imagination of course! Apparently, they don’t like the idea of being a “spirit.” That’s not appealing to them — they love the flesh. One proponent of this teaching said, “Flesh and blood no more! We’ll be flesh and bone! Flesh and bone going all the way to heaven!” That’s the way they see the Biblical view of heaven.

“Projection” suggests to others what they should or should not believe. The concept of “a bodiless spirit floating around on a cloud somewhere” comes out of one’s imagination — “out of thin air.” There is nothing in the Bible akin to it. Since they don’t like the idea, they suggest you wouldn’t like it either. They introduce that you should not believe it by saying that nobody wants to do that. Since you don’t want to be the only one who believes it, you feel compelled to go along with the crowd. It’s a psychological suggestion which prepares the minds of others to reflect what the proponents of it believe themselves. However, people need to think for themselves and not let anyone tell us what we should believe and/or not believe. The Bible and the Bible alone is our guide (cf. John 12:48).

“Renewed earth” doctrine says we get our physical, material, tangible body back in the resurrection. However, 1 Corinthians 15:50 says “...**flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.**” They haven’t figured out how to get around that so they run to Luke 24:39 where they think they’ve found the answer to their dilemma. Jesus said, “*a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.*” They use their imagination and come up with the idea that since Jesus, after his resurrection, had a body of “flesh and bones,” that we will get our physical body of flesh and bones back — minus any blood of course. They acknowledge that “flesh and blood” can’t go to heaven (1 Cor. 15:50), but then turn around and say that “flesh and bones” can. Was the Lord making a distinction between a body of “flesh and blood” and a body of “flesh and bones” (without blood)? Was that his emphasis? Not at all. He was simply calling attention to the fact that he had not yet ascended unto the

Father in heaven; and as evidence of it, he was in a body of flesh and bones. He was in a fleshly body, not a spiritual body. Heaven is a spiritual realm — a sphere not subject to the physical world. It's beyond the physical world. It was forty days before Jesus ascended back into heaven (cf. Acts 1:3).

Renewed earth doctrine has created a major distinction (where none exists) between flesh and blood and flesh and bones. They attempt to solve it but cannot. Paul wrote to Corinth saying that at the Lord's second coming both the righteous dead and righteous living will be "changed" — from a physical body to a spiritual body. *"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed"* (1 Cor. 15:51-52). We will be changed from a corruptible physical body into an incorruptible spiritual body. Our body will no longer be flesh and bones and blood. The Holy Spirit says, *"It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body"* (1 Cor. 15:44). *"For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory"* (1 Cor. 15:53-54). Philippians 3:21 says the same thing. Our "vile body" will be fashioned *"like unto his glorious body."* While Jesus walked the earth he was not yet in his spiritually glorified body. He was in a body of flesh, not spirit. At his second coming, the redeemed leave the earth and will be with him forever with a spiritual body. *"...The dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord"* (1 Thess. 4:16-17). This verse clearly points out that the redeemed leave the earth and will be with the Lord forever (in the air, beyond this earth).

Consider also that the apostle John lived with Jesus for three years or so and was with him after his resurrection, yet he wrote many years later: *"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we*

shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2). John saw his body of flesh and bones after his resurrection and before his ascension into heaven (Luke 24:39) yet wrote many years later that we don't know "what we shall be." He said we do not know what we will be like; but, renewed earth advocates say we do know. Now, which do you believe? The inspired apostle John or uninspired men?

If we know anything about what the Bible teaches on the resurrection and our eternal destiny in heaven, it is the fact that we will not be in our physical body we have now! Notice the words of Holy Scripture. *"Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die: And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: **It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.** There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. ... Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. ... Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption"* (1 Cor. 15:36-44,46,50).

Notice the strong language of verses 36-37, *"Thou fool...thou sowest not that body that shall be."* The green stalk of corn which comes forth from the soil has no resemblance to the grain of corn that was planted. That which comes forth looks nothing like that which was sown! But it's still corn. The renewed earth doctrine says Christ died to give us physical (material, tangible) immortality. It says we will get

our physical body back and the Lord will live with us on this renewed earth for eternity.

All the verses above set in contrast the physical body and the spiritual body. The physical body, and nothing with which it has to do, will go to heaven — yea, CANNOT go to heaven! *"For here (on the earth) ...we no continuing city, but we seek one to come"* (Heb. 13:14). *"While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal"* (2 Cor. 4:18). The things we see, physical things, are temporary. The things we can't see, spiritual things, are eternal.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Velma Scott	\$10
Anonymous	\$50
H. L. Bradshaw.....	\$100
Anonymous	\$25
Anonymous	\$100
Anonymous	\$80
Baker C/C, Baker, FL.....	\$25
Lana Turner	\$50
Anonymous	\$75
Anonymous	\$100
Arlington C/C, McMinnville, TN.....	\$50
Sheldon Wright.....	\$50
Del Brantley	\$50
Anonymous	\$25
Bethlehem C/C, Baxter, TN	\$100
Neely's Bend C/C, Madison, TN	\$125
Bradford C/C, Bradford, TN.....	\$50
Anonymous	\$200
Bob Hawkins	\$30
Anonymous	\$1,000
Anonymous	\$200
Anonymous	\$1,000
Anonymous	\$40
Del Brantley	\$50
Central Arkansas C/C, Alexander, AR	\$200
Arlington C/C, McMinnville, TN.....	\$50
Anonymous	\$250
Beginning Balance	\$6,077.43
Contributions	\$4,085.00
Debits	
Postage	\$1,919.77
Paper	\$1,128.70
Supplies	\$212.87
Repairs	\$540.12
Ending Balance	\$6,360.97

"THE NEW HEAVENS AND THE NEW EARTH" #4

Gary McDade

In the end, when Alcorn's fanciful 492 page book has been read and studied, there is not one single, solitary new fact revealed about heaven. His imaginings, speculations, and "twisting" of the Scriptures, in reality, have yielded no actual, truthful, or Scriptural information.

On occasion, brother N. B. Hardeman would make an effective argument and state that it was "un-get-over-able." Here are a few "un-get-over-able" arguments for Randy Alcorn and his followers.

The Melchisedec priesthood of Christ contains two integral parts: 1) Christ is a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec (Psa. 110:4; Heb. 5:6; 6:20; 7:3,17,21) and 2) "If he [Jesus Christ] were on earth, he should not be a priest" (Heb. 8:4), therefore Christ will never be on the earth again. In contradistinction, Randy Alcorn affirms, "...He will also physically reside on the earth with us. Have you ever imagined what it would be like to walk the earth with Jesus, as the disciples did? Have you ever wished you had that opportunity? You will — on the New Earth" (p.188). Alcorn is wrong about his view of heaven being on earth. If Jesus were to come dwell on earth, the moment that He set foot on the earth the benefits of his crimson blood that flowed from his riven side "for the remission of sins" would terminate because His position as our High Priest to apply His blood for our forgiveness would be forever abrogated.

The Bible doctrine of Jesus Christ being our "forerunner" (Heb. 6:20) requires His followers to go where He is right now. The word "forerunner," appearing only here in the Bible, is from *prodromos* which Joseph Henry Thayer says means, "Forerunner. ...One who comes in advance to a place whither the rest are to follow" (p.538). The verse tells us Christ presently is entered within the veil or in heaven for us, and our hope is anchored there and secured by two immutable things: God's promise and God's oath. Jesus was "taken up from you into heaven" (Acts 1:11) and is "set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb.

12:2). Therefore, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:1-2). Randy Alcorn uses the word "forerunner" in his book called *Heaven*, but he redefines the term. He wrote, "...Christ's resurrection is the forerunner of our own, and our resurrection is the forerunner of the earth's" (p.108). This is typical of Alcorn's twisting of the Scripture which, unfortunately, he does to his own destruction, "As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest [twist, NKJV], as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction" (2 Peter 3:16).

Another reason Jesus Christ is not coming back to the earth is because He has finished the work God gave Him to do on the earth. Jesus Christ affirmed, "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4). And, "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, **It is finished:** and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost" (John 19:30, emphasis added). No premillennialist has ever accepted what Jesus said in these verses.

The material universe was created *ex nihilo*, "out of nothing," for the Bible affirms, "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear [were not made of things which are visible, NKJV]" (Heb. 11:3). This passage defeats "materialism, the doctrine that whatever exists is either physical matter, or depends upon physical matter" (P. Helm, *New Dictionary of Theology*, p.416). As you know, Randy Alcorn

avers, heaven is "a familiar, physical, tangible place" (p.15), "a finite environment" (p.44), heaven has physical properties (p.57), and "there will be no more gulf between the spiritual and physical worlds" (p.103). Hebrews 11:3 stands to correct Randy Alcorn's materialism.

God is called "the eternal Spirit" in Hebrews 9:14. Yet, Randy Alcorn insists, "The Incarnation is about God inhabiting space and time as a human being — the new heavens and New Earth are about God making space and time his *eternal home*, as Jesus is God incarnate, so the New Earth will be Heaven incarnate" (p.46). Concerning God, Job affirmed, "**For he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment**" (Job 9:32, emphasis added). Samuel also declared, "And also the *Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent*" (1 Samuel 15:29, emphasis added). God said, "Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it" (Job 40:2). Randy Alcorn has affirmed in *Heaven* "That God would come down to the New Earth to live with us fits perfectly with his original plan" (p.45), and he rejects and omits the following three passages of Scripture on the nature of God: "Who is the image of **the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature**" (Col. 1:15, emphasis added); "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, **invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen**" (1 Tim. 1:17, emphasis added), and "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is **invisible**" (Heb. 11:27, emphasis added).

Randy Alcorn denies what the apostle John wrote in Revelation 21:1, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first

earth were *passed away*; and *there was no more sea*” (emphasis added). Alcorn teaches the first heaven and the first earth will not pass away; they will be “relocated” (p.261), and he says, “I predict the New Earth will include large bodies of water where we’ll dive, perhaps without tanks or masks. Can you imagine effortlessly holding your breath for hours? Imagine fresh water we can freely drink of, water in which we can open wide our eyes and play with God’s creatures of the deep” (p.275). This is not biblical exegesis; this is a false teacher who from the beginning of his book of fiction urged his readers to “fire up our imagination” (p.16).

Again, the readers of the Bible are reminded of the great warning the apostle John strategically placed at the close of Revelation, “*For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book*” (Rev. 22:18-19).

Heaven by Randy Alcorn adamantly opposes the apostle Peter’s language concerning the destruction of the world in 2 Peter 3:10-13. Where the Word of God says “destroyed,” Alcorn takes it away and replaces it with “renewed.” Where the Word of God says “burned up,” Alcorn takes it away and replaces it with “refined.” Where the Word of God says “the earth and the works therein shall be burned up,” Alcorn takes it away and replaces it with “*The same earth* destined for destruction is also destined for restoration” (p.152, emphasis added). Where the Word of God says “dissolved,” Alcorn takes it away and replaces it with “resurrected.”

Throughout his book, Alcorn takes the Word of God away and replaces it with his own words. He takes obedient faith out and replaces it with “faith only.” He takes “be faithful unto death” out and replaces it with “once saved, always saved.” He takes the Melchisedec Priesthood of Jesus Christ out and replaces it with millions of Jesus Christs walking on the earth (p.190). He takes the church of Christ as “the dispensation of the full-

ness of times” out and replaces it with the millennial kingdom of Christ on earth (p.103). It is his usual approach to Scripture to omit or reject the Word of God outright. Faithful members of the church of Christ have too much respect for the Bible to accept Randy Alcorn’s *Heaven* as a credible source on heaven or any other Biblical subject.

Alcorn quotes Wayne Grudem who prefers “laid bare” in 2 Peter 3:10 from the NIV instead of “exposed” from the ESV on which translation committee Grudem himself served! Notice the ambiguity Alcorn presents from Grudem on a central element of their scheme, “Peter ‘may not be speaking of the earth as a planet but rather the surface things on the earth (that is, much of the ground and the things on the ground)’” (p.152). By using the word “may” the reader, now drawn into Alcorn’s system of twisting the Scripture, is left to imagine for himself how this cataclysmic event unfolds. The apostle Peter used the words, “pass away,” “elements shall melt with fervent heat,” “shall be burned up,” “all these things shall be dissolved,” “dissolved,” and “the elements shall melt with fervent heat.” And, the subject of this language is “the heavens” and “the earth.” Alcorn’s position is that somehow “laid bare” is supposed to negate all Peter’s inspired words! Observe, the word *katakaesetai* translated, “burned up,” appears in the Alexandrinus and many other ancient manuscripts, lectionaries, and translations. The word for “laid bare” is from *heurthesetai* future passive tense from *heurisko* concerning which James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, recognized scholars of the koine or New Testament Greek drawn “from the papyri and other non-literary sources” from the first century, tell us the word is used in the following senses: “I cannot find the entry in the books” and “because this man has left the country and is not to be found” (*The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*, pp.264-265, the italicized words are the definition). This shows the meaning of the word to be a search for something that is found alright; it is found missing! *The Shorter Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* by F. Wilbur Gingrich (revised by Frederick W. Dander) has the meaning of *heurisko* “be judged” here in 2 Peter 3:10 as in a judgment by

fire (p.81). Therefore, these insights from the Greek text of 2 Peter 3:10 prove that the meaning of “laid bare” is anything but “restoration” as Alcorn insists (p.154). And, these passages from Peter’s pen harmonize with John’s writing in Revelation 20:11, “*And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.*” The phrase, “There was found no place for them,” is from *topos oux heurethe* [aorist passive of *heurisko*] where once again having disappeared or having been annihilated is the meaning leaving nothing to be “restored,” “remodeled,” or “resurrected.”

The late brother Guy N. Woods accurately wrote about 2 Peter 3:10-13, “The works that are to perish in the fire which shall ultimately destroy the earth are those which belong to the earth and are characteristic of it, whether of God or man. Along with its dissolution there will be the burning of all that man has accomplished of a material nature — houses, cities, monuments, etc. — everything to which he has set his hand here. These, along with all of God’s material creation, are to be dissolved, consumed in the heat of the mighty catastrophe” (GA Commentary, p.187). Peter’s admonition in verse 11, “*Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,*” finds a parallel in Hebrews 11:13-16, “*These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.*” Brother Woods concluded, “In view of the transitory nature of the world and all that belongs to it, children of God should cease their concern about it and fix their attention on those matters that are eternal.” The apostle Paul wrote, “*For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far*

more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for **the things which are seen are temporal** [temporary, NKJV]; **but the things which are not seen are eternal**" (2 Cor. 4:17-18, emphasis added).

The undisputed theme of *Heaven* by Randy Alcorn is God dwelling on the earth with mankind. He states, "Utopian idealists who dream of mankind creating 'Heaven on Earth' are destined for disappointment. But though they are wrong in believing that humans can achieve a utopian existence apart from God, the reality of Heaven on Earth — God dwelling with mankind in the world he made for us — will in fact be realized. It is God's dream. It is God's plan He — not we — will accomplish it" (p.46).

The question, "Will God dwell on the earth?" is a question the wisest man who ever lived — other than our

Lord Jesus Christ — by the inspiration of the living God answered 3,000 years ago. Randy Alcorn is clever, but he is not wise, and he is not inspired of God as was King Solomon, who wrote, "*But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded*" (1 Kings 8:27)? There we have all we need to make a decision to accept or reject Randy Alcorn's book, *Heaven*. It is a purely "either/or" decision. Either Randy Alcorn is right about God dwelling on the earth and Solomon was wrong, or Solomon was right about "heaven and the heaven of heavens" being unable to contain our infinite God much less the temple Solomon built for him and the world it is in and Randy Alcorn is wrong. Decidedly, there are no two ways about it!

In the end, when Alcorn's fanciful 492 page book has been read and

studied, there is not one single, solitary new fact revealed about heaven. His imaginings, speculations, and "twisting" of the Scriptures, in reality, have yielded no actual, truthful, or Scriptural information. All he has done is entertain a million people with the materialism of Anthony Hoekema and the fictitious writings of C. S. Lewis to formulate a far-fetched and inane rambling about the sacred dwelling place of God. Neither he nor his followers will ever be able to minimize the strength of Solomon's words 3,000 years ago when he affirmed, "*But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded*" (1 Kings 8:27)?

4th of 4 parts
3210 Parker Lane
Chattanooga, TN 37419

THE TIMES OF RESTITUTION

Bill Boyd

In Acts 3:21 Peter speaks of "*the times of restitution of all things.*" That is the King James Version. I like the word "*restitution*" and I retained it in the title, but most Bible versions use the word "*restoration*," and so I will do so as well, because I want this to be "*easy to understand*" by my target audience, and many of them are not great fans of the King James Version.

The word translated "*restoration*" is unique to Peter, and it is used only here in the New Testament. Premillennialists tell us that this restoration is the time of a coming earthly millennium. Advocates of the renewed earth doctrine tell us that it is the time when the earth will be materially returned to something like Eden before Adam sinned. In the context of this passage Peter spoke of "*seasons*," "*times*," and "*days*" (all plural). I affirm that these "*seasons*," "*times*," and "*days*" are now (the Christian Age) — that we are living in the "*times of restoration*" now, and that it is not a material restoration of the earth, but a spiritual restoration of the souls of erring men. The context calls for this

conclusion.

Peter's sermon in Acts 3 is sometimes called "the second gospel sermon" — the first being the one in Acts 2. The two sermons are much alike. In the first, Peter affirmed that God raised Jesus from the dead (Acts 2:22-24). As proof, he appealed to the prophecies of the Scriptures (Acts 2:25-31), their testimony as witnesses (Acts 2:32), and the things accompanying the outpouring of the Holy Spirit which were seen and heard (Acts 2:23). In Acts 3 he affirmed the same proposition (Acts 3:15), using the same proofs; they were witnesses (Acts 3:15), the miracle of the lame man healed was before them (Acts 3:16), and he appealed to the things spoken by the prophets (Acts 3:18). The Scriptures of the prophets were being fulfilled in their time (the first century) was the power behind the appeal to the prophets. That is the context.

Acts 3:19 is often compared to Acts 2:38. The passages are parallel. Both tell us to "*repent*." Where one says, "*be baptized*," the other says, "*be converted*," because it is baptism that

completes the conversion process. Where one says, "*for the remission of sins*" the other says, "*that your sins may be blotted out*." Where one says, "*ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*" the other says, "*that there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord*." It would detract from my purpose to deviate into a lengthy discussion of "*the gift of the Holy Spirit*," but when so doing, this parallel ought to be accounted for. The King James Version calls this "*the times of refreshing*," but I like the way the American Standard Version uses the word "*seasons*" instead of "*times*." When I read the American Standard Version, I think of the refreshing change of seasons. After a hot humid summer, a cool dry autumn is refreshing. A warm spring day is refreshing after a long cold winter. So also are the spiritual joys that follow salvation.

Peter says that the Lord would send Jesus, "*whom the heavens must receive until the times of restoration*" (Acts 3:21). The English Standard Version calls this "*the time* (singular) *for restoring all things*," the New Ameri-

can Standard Bible calls it “*the period* (singular) *of restoration of all things*,” But Peter did not say, “*until the time*” (singular); he said “*until the times*” (plural). The “*times of restoration*” correspond to the “*seasons of refreshing*.” The “*times*” and “*seasons*” coincide with the reception of Jesus in heaven. Jesus is received in heaven now, and the “*seasons of refreshing*” are ours now, therefore “*the times of restoration*” are now.

In Acts 3:21 Peter says “*the times of restoration*” are the times “*which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.*” Moses was the first of those prophets. He identified these times as the times in which men would harken to the prophet who the Lord would raise up like Moses (Acts 3:22; Deut. 18:18). He was speaking of Jesus (Heb. 1:1-2), and we harken to the voice of Jesus now; as was said in the presence of Moses on the mount of transfiguration, “*Hear ye him*” (Matt. 17:5).

Peter further said, “*all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days*” (Acts 3:24). Now follow this: In Acts 3:21 Peter said “*the times of restoration*” were the times “*spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets, since the world began,*” and in Acts 3:22-24 he said that Moses, Samuel, and all the prophets that followed spoke of “*these days,*” therefore “*the times of restoration of all things*” are “*these days.*”

Peter said that the heaven must receive Christ until “*the times of restoration.*” He did not say the heavens would receive him until the times of restoration began. The heavens are receiving Christ in “*these days,*” and the “*times of restoration*” are “*these days,*” therefore Peter was preaching that the heavens would receive Jesus until the times of restoration are completed. Jesus ascended into heaven to sit on his throne at the right hand of God (Acts 2:33). He is now in heaven “*exalted*” (Acts 2:33), “*glorified*” (Acts 3:13), and “*received*” (Acts 3:21), and the heavens must receive him while he is restoring all things to himself. All who will “*repent and be converted*” (Acts 3:19) are spiritually restored. Therefore, he is restoring all things to himself now.

Paul’s language is similar to Peter’s, and they taught the same thing.

Where Peter said “*restoration,*” Paul said “*reconciliation.*” “*When we were enemies we were reconciled to God*” (Rom. 5:10), “*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God*” (2 Cor. 5:18-20), and, “*Having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven*” (Col. 1:20). The present spiritual re-

conciliation is the present spiritual restoration. The restoration of “*all things*” in Acts 3:21, is the reconciliation of “*all things*” in Colossians 1:20.

Advocates of the renewed earth tell us that the “*times* (plural) *of the restoration*” is the time (singular) when Christ will renew the material earth. I say, prove it. Find it in the context and prove it. Telling us what you think it means does not prove it. Show us that “*all his holy prophets,*” including Moses, Samuel, “*and those that follow after,*” have foretold of “*those days*” instead of “*these days.*” They cannot do it. Advocates of the renewed earth theory will have to find their doctrine elsewhere.

wmhboyd@aol.com
647 Finger Bluff Road
Morrison, TN 37357

**SEND US YOUR
CHANGE OF ADDRESS**

Pick A Side...

(Continued from page 89)

light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.” Which do you love? The Light (truth) or Darkness (error)? Remember, to try to be neutral or to make no choice at all is the same as making the choice for evil. The point is, walk (live) in the Light of Truth (1 John 1:7) or walk (live) in the Blackness of Darkness of Error (Jude 13).

- Matthew 10:34-39, “*Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.*” The Lord’s words here are powerful indeed. Choosing the way of Truth will divide families because many

(perhaps most) in the family will choose the wrong way. The point is, the Lord calls upon all to choose. Which will it be: family or God, right or wrong, heaven or hell — temporary (brief) or permanent (eternal).

The Gospel of Jesus is polarizing. It calls men out of darkness. Few come to the light, while many love the darkness. This is not a fault of the message nor of the messenger. The Gospel is polarizing because some hearts are soft and some are hard. Some minds are open and others are closed. Some will change and others will not.

Should we stop preaching the truth because some turn away? We must preach the same polarizing Gospel that Jesus preached. The Gospel is the truth. Paul said, “*I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek*” (Rom. 1:16). Believe and be Baptized or be Condemned (Mark 16:16). The point is, Pick a Side.

1495 E Empire Ave.
Benton Harbor, MI 49022

DANGERS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS #6

(NEW AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION)

Randy Kea

This translation is not to be confused with the American Standard Version (ASV) of 1901. The NASV was completed in 1971. It was a production of the Lockman Foundation (California) which prior to that had produced the so-called Amplified Version. As with all translations there are two concerns: 1) What are the texts underlying the translation? 2) Are there translational problems that result in doctrinal error?

The texts underlying the NASV in the Old and New Testaments are faulty. Concerning the Old Testament, they did not use exclusively the Masoretic text. You will see in marginal notes DSS (Dead Sea Scrolls) and GK (Septuagint — LXX). These sources are used in addition to the Hebrew Masoretic text. Because of this you will see those distressing marginal notes that cast doubt on the verbal preservation of the Old Testament text. Remember as we have emphasized in previous articles, Jesus only used the Hebrew text and claimed that it was verbally preserved (Matt. 5:17-18; 23:35; Luke 16:17; 24:44). I am aware of the popular line of thinking that takes the position that Jesus did not use exclusively the Hebrew Masoretic text (even in the Lord's church). However, we maintain that internal evidence such as the above Scripture references is inspired evidence and therefore conclusive for anyone who believes in the verbal inspiration and preservation of the Bible.

Concerning the text underlying the New Testament, as with essentially all modern translations, the NASV uses the Critical Text (Nestle/Aland); therefore you will see brackets in parts of the New Testament and footnotes — again casting doubt on the integrity of the passage under consideration. For example, see Mark 16:9-20 and John 7:53-8:11. Remember the Nestle/Aland text is shorter than the Received Text (King James Version) by 2,886 words. This would be equivalent to dropping out entirely the books of First and Second Peter. How can anyone say it does not make any difference which text base one uses to produce a Bible?

The NASV is much better than the NIV. However, it does have problems in several passages. Here are some doctrinal issues with the NASV:

1. It has errors on the subject of marriage, divorce, and remarriage. It allows divorce for "unchastity" in Matthew 5:32 and "immorality" in Matthew 19:9. Both of these words allow divorce for more reasons than "fornication." As previously noted, dirty jokes and lust would be immoral, but they are not grounds for divorce and remarriage.

2. The NASV has Paul expressing his "opinion" in 1 Corinthians 7:25,40. This would be error concerning the Biblical doctrine of *inspiration*. Paul was giving an inspired apostolic judgment (1 Cor. 14:37), not merely expressing his personal, human opinion.

3. The NASV lends credence to premillennial errors. The Greek present tense participle "receiving" is translated *receive* (future kingdom error). Re-phrasing Revelation 20:4-5 lends support to the "rapture" error. The NASV has "the rest of the dead did not come to life" rather than "the rest of the dead lived not..."

4. The NASV has Jesus contradicting Paul. In Matthew 5:17 it has Jesus saying, "Do not think that I came to abolish the law;" then in Ephesians 2:15 it has Paul saying, "by abolishing in his flesh the enmity, which is the law of commandments..."

5. The NASV has salvation at the point of *confession* (Rom. 10:10). They change the key word "unto," to "resulting in."

Here are some final considerations. In the introductory notes of the NASV, they have these format policies listed:

1. Paragraphs are designated by bold-faced numbers or letters.
2. Quotation marks are used in the text in accordance with modern English usage.
3. "Thou, thy, and thee" are changed to "you" except in the language of prayer when addressing deity.
4. Personal pronouns are capitalized when pertaining to deity.
5. Small caps in the New Testament are used in the text to indicate Old Testament quotes.

Here are a few comments about these policies. In the first place, there are no paragraphs or quotation marks in the Greek text. To this extent, this would be an interpretive procedure, not purely a translational procedure on their part. Changing the singular forms "thou, thy and thee" to "you" (singular or plural) can lead to erroneous conclusions by the English reader (See Luke 22:31-32). Finally, concerning using caps for direct quotations from the Old in the New Testament, would have Jesus misquoting the Old Testament. For example, in Luke 4:18-19, Jesus does not quote verbatim the Isaiah passages (Isa. 61:1-2; 58:6), but adds the clause "to set at liberty them that are bruised." He therefore paraphrased, or targumed this Old Testament passage. I know this is technical but it shows their erroneous policy.

Because of the above facts, we cannot endorse the NASV as reliable, accurate or trustworthy as a translation.

1515 N 30th Ave.
Humboldt, TN 38343

Seek The Old Paths is a monthly publication of the **Leoni Church of Christ** and is under the oversight of its elders. It is FREE, being supported by the contributions of both individuals and congregations. Its primary purpose and goal in publication can be found in Jude 3, 2 Tim. 4:2, Titus 1:13, Titus 2:1 and 2 Peter 1:12. All mail received may be published unless it is marked "not for publication." The church building is located at: 6818 McMinnville Hwy, Woodbury, TN 37190.

Editor: **Garland M. Robinson** — seektheoldpaths.com

LEONI CHURCH OF CHRIST
PO BOX 7506
MCMINNVILLE, TN 37111
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Woodbury, TN
Permit No. 17